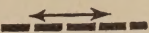
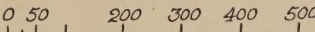


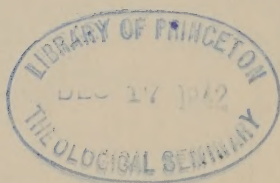


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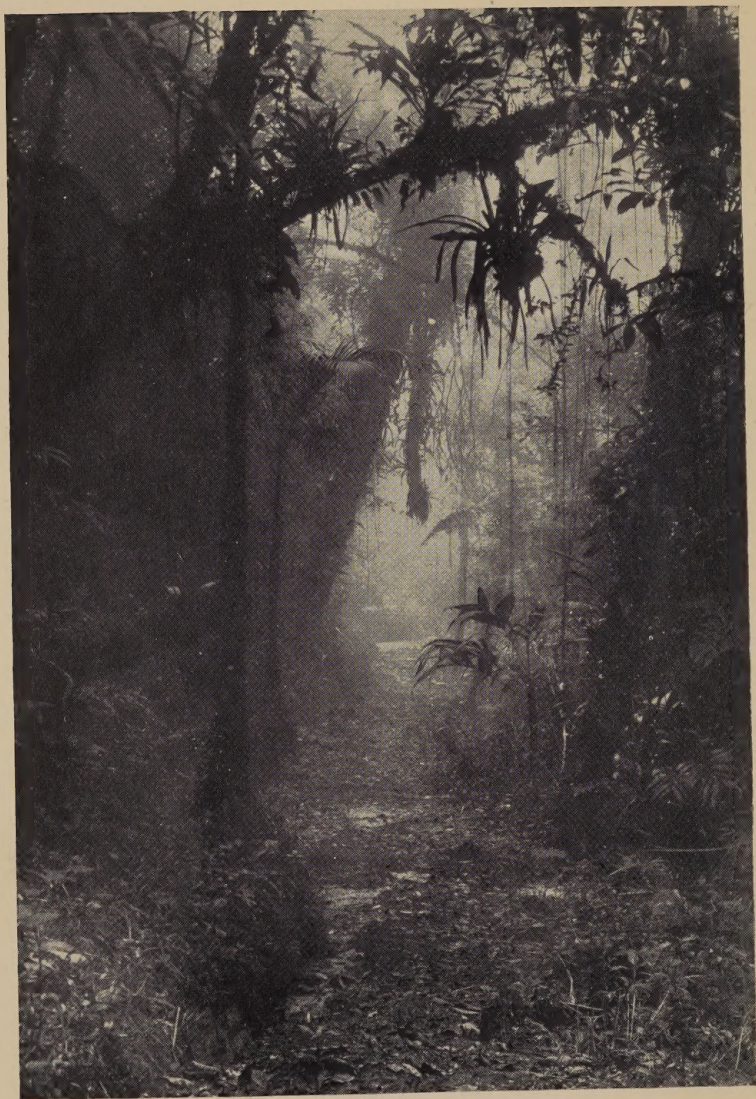




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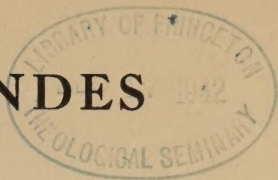
THE BRAZILIAN FOREST

AMAZON AND ANDES

BY

K. G. GRUBB

AUTHOR OF "THE LOWLAND INDIANS OF AMAZONIA"



WITH 139 ILLUSTRATIONS AND AN
ENDPAPER-MAP



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PREFACE

THIS book is intended to convey some impressions of general interest gathered during the author's residence in South America as a missionary. The journeys in the Andes and the Upper Amazon region, of which the description occupies most of the narrative, were undertaken under the auspices of the World Dominion Movement.

K. G. G.

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AMAZON AND ANDES

AMAZON AND ANDES

CHAPTER I

THE PEOPLE OF AMAZONIA

THE north-east of Brazil has strange and desolate scenes to reveal to the traveller. Although it borders on the basin of the Amazon, it is crying against it in revolt. It is a land of dryness and want. The peril of famine of water, of excessive and fatal droughts, hangs from year to year over the dweller in the State of Ceara. This is the real *sertão* or desert of Brazil, and it has bred a hardy race of men, nurtured in the midst of a constant fight against a foe whose strength can never be calculated from one season to another. Every year the arid season or summer places a fatal limit to prosperity and progress. The streams dry up, the pools of foetid water stagnate or disappear, vegetation dies, branches droop in nakedness, the dust blows across the plains in clouds, and all nature is burnt. There is no shade, no refreshing green, no rich or fruitful plantation. The means of life become scarce, man instinctively tenacious of his crumbs. After the first impressions of the journey succeeds the inevitable ennui, the heightened sensitiveness of expectancy, the temptation to despair.

It is the men of the *sertões*, the Cearenses, who have populated the Amazon valley. From the earliest times this state has been subject to periodical droughts. The climax was reached in 1877-79. The

terrible scarcity of those years cost the state the ruin of almost every private fortune. Nearly all the cattle perished. Smallpox became rampant and 180,000 deaths were recorded. One hundred and twenty-five thousand persons emigrated to other regions of Brazil. To the north and west of Ceara stretched the fertile forests of the Amazon. This was a land of promise and apparent wealth. Watered by broad and mighty rivers, by sinuous and hidden tributaries and by scores of creeks and brooks, such lands, at least, could never know a drought. So the Cearenses came down from their inland villages to the coast and took ship for the great river to the north. Never were men transferred through such a range and diversity of conditions. Water was here in plenty, rain and river, lake and flood. The torrid sun of the burning plains was exchanged for the solemnity of a perpetual shade. A land grudging and meagre in her charities had given place to a land of profusion and variety. The strength and stamina of those men reared amidst the rigours and extremities of a drought-stricken country proved sufficient to maintain the protracted battle with the empire of the floods. The struggle against the incalculable odds is still unfolding its dramatic passages, its epics of bravery or of defeat, of endurance or of despair. But it is to the man of Ceara that the laurels of victory will ultimately be due.

The Cearense arrives in Manaus or Pará, the leading ports of the great river. If he is already contracted to some *patrão* or employer, he awaits the steamer which will take him to his destination at a rubber camp or *seringal* on some river of the interior. He is watched during these days to make sure that he does not get away and contract with some other *patrão*. Coming from the inland plains of

a land of scarcity, he is overcome by the sight of many cheap and gaudy articles for sale in the stores along the streets and by the profusion of fruits in the market. All that his *patrão* may have advanced him is soon spent. He starts for the future scene of his life's labours already in debt. Presently the river-steamer will be ready to sail. He travels third class, politely or impolitely termed 'cattle-passage'. I have travelled on one steamer more than a month under these conditions. Perhaps two hundred passengers will be herded together on the lower deck of the *gaiola* or 'cage', the local term for these uncomfortable craft. There is no division of quarters between passengers, cattle, turtle, or pigs—all are livestock, varying only in degree and not in kind. It is a useful tip to sling one's hammock immediately underneath the beams of the deck above. In this position neither the horns of the cattle, the embarkation of cargo, nor the loading of metre-sticks of wood to the number of five or ten thousand for the furnaces will disturb you in the ordinary course of events. The accommodation may be crowded, but there are no facilities for privacy. If an unfortunate wretch dies from fever or consumption, he is buried on shore, under the shade of the death-sheltering forest, and the voyage resumed without delay. The mental attitudes of the herd of passengers vary. In the old days of flourishing successes in the rubber trade there was a spirit of unbounded optimism which would brook no voice of prophetic warning. In these more straitened times often a company of men is coming downstream disillusioned and despondent and yet more fortunate than their fellows, for by long-continued and deserving efforts they have freed themselves from the slavery of debt which has bound them to the *patrão*.

Finally, the Cearense arrives at the *seringal*. From the store he draws the articles necessary for his pursuit and the supplies 'of first necessity' for his life. Nothing is gratis. Although the country of his origin and this of his adoption are poles apart, he receives none of the privileges of the foreign immigrant. *Farinha*—a coarse flour, made from the mandioca plant and ready for eating—salt, coffee, sugar, *pirarucú* or dried fish, a Winchester and a box of ammunition are sufficient for him. He builds his small *barraca* or hut on some stretch of the river near-by, and furnishes it with these and a few other necessities. But he is *brabo* or green, literally savage, and he must pay his tribute to the new environment. This he does by succumbing to attacks of malaria. Often quinine is not within his reach; often, when it is, it is too expensive to add the heavy price to his account. The fever does not prevent him from working, except during the actual attack. Gradually he becomes accustomed to the new life. At all events, this appearance of plenty is more welcome than the arid dunes and deserts of Ceara. That magnetic, almost fatal, attraction of the forest every day gains the ascendant over his being. The former life fades into oblivion. He marries, if he has not brought his family with him. He is already a *caboclo* by adoption, as the term originally applies to the native of Amazonia. He ceases to be *brabo*. The river, the forest, the *seringal*, and the *barraca* have become not only his home but a part of his life.

The *barracão*, or store, depot, and residence of the *patrão*, is built of solid planks or 'lawful timbers', a local and not an official phrase, as there is no law in these parts. It is placed when possible on the terra firma in contrast to the *varzea* or land subject to inundations. The walls and floor may be made,

as they nearly always are in the *barracas*, of *paxiuba*. This palm, common over Amazonas, is cut down for the purpose and the bark beaten flat. A thatched roof of palm fronds serves, but in some cases corrugated iron may be purchased. From here radiate all the activities of the *seringal*, which is generally rented, on credit, from some absentee owner or landlord. Here is the stock of merchandise with which the *seringueiros* or *caucheiros*, so named according to the quality of rubber which they are extracting, are paid. The most important individual in the actual working of the wild rubber industry is the *matteiro*. It is his duty to open *estradas* or paths from one rubber-tree to another. The tree does not necessarily occur in the forest in clumps, but the specimens are often more than 200 yards apart. The *matteiro* penetrates the interior accompanied by an assistant known as a *toqueiro*. As soon as he identifies a tree, he leaves the *toqueiro* seated by it and goes off to explore for the next one. When this is found the two shout across the forest, or at greater distance communicate by rifle shots, and work through the intermediate undergrowth until they meet. When the *estrada* is completed it will include one hundred to two hundred trees. It is the *matteiro's* duty not only to place the *seringueiros* on these paths, but to supervise their work. In addition, he is always an expert in the lore of the forest. His is that intuitive knowledge which comes in many regions of the earth to those who have been brought up amongst, and familiarized with, the secrets of their environment. All the different species of the trees are known to him, the flooded ground and the dry ground. Every rivulet has its distinctive appearance, and he can tell at once where an almost stagnant *igarapé* or stream is going to flow out. As a surveyor

of the commercial potentialities of the forest he is indispensable.

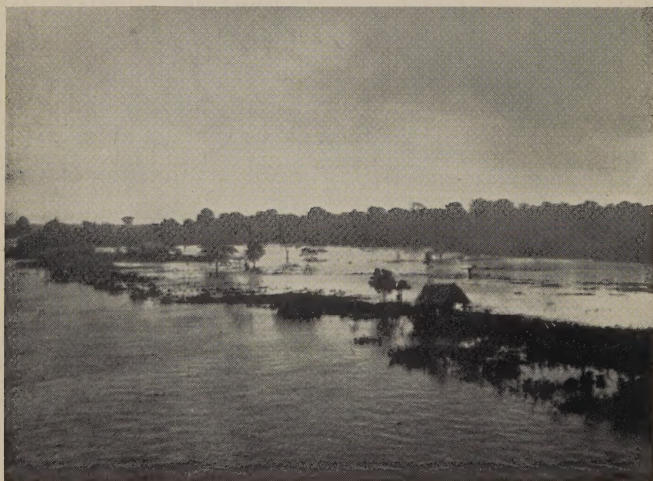
The *seringal* is divided into the *margem* or part bordering on the river and the 'centre' or interior. It is in the 'centre' that the *seringueiro*, the actual rubber-worker, lives and carries out his task. He chooses a place not far removed from sources of water and there makes his *barraca* or little hut, generally a small shelter with the sides entirely open. Close to the *barraca* are the ends of the *estradas*, one of which it is his duty to work every day. They are generally five to six miles in length. He is always up between four and five o'clock in the morning, as in the heat of the day the rubber latex coagulates with inconvenient speed. He makes his small cup of strong coffee and then sets out. As a rule he is barefooted, or perhaps shod with sandals made out of the rubber collected on the spot. On the first day he merely places at the foot of each tree the little *tijelas* or tin cups used to receive the 'milk' or white latex of the tree. During the next two days he cuts the bark with a small hatchet, or sometimes a large knife supplied especially for the purpose, in order to 'accustom the tree to it', as the usual phrase goes. But when once the *estrada* is prepared, each morning he bleeds the trees and immediately under the incision fixes one of the small metal cups to collect the milk. As soon as the *estrada* is completed he goes over it again, emptying the cups into a bucket or receptacle designed to hold about two gallons, which he takes back to the *barraca*. When a tree has been excessively bled over a long period its bark not infrequently appears coarse and roughened and the *seringueiros* appropriately term this a 'crocodile' tree. At the *barraca* he prepares a fire by burning the nuts of certain palms, particularly



THE SMALL BOAT HARBOUR, PARÁ



IN THE PARK AT PARÁ



IN THE HEIGHT OF THE RAINS

the *uricury* (*Attalea speciosa*). The resulting smoke, which is dense, white, and rich in creosotic vapours, he concentrates by means of a funnel over which he supports a pole 5 or 6 feet in length. On pouring latex over this it rapidly condenses, and thus, day after day, he adds to his ball of rubber until it weighs 100 lb. or more. This operation concluded, the day's work is over. The *seringueiro* prepares his own meal and throws himself into his hammock, where, protected by his mosquito-net, he can betake himself to the perennial cigarette. Day after day he passes in identical circumstances and the same solitude. To the monotony and sadness of the forest around he adds the uniform burden of his task, which he knows can bring him in these days only the most miserable pittance when he leaves the 'centre' for the *barracão* of the *patrão*.

The *seringueiro* is only occupied in the centre for the six months of the year which constitute the 'summer'. Generally this begins in May or June and continues till November or December. During the winter or remaining months he either lives near the *barracão* on the bank of the river or, if he has a balance in hand, he may descend to Pará or Manaus. Throughout these long months, however, many remain in small *barracas* by distant streams, whiling away the time in laziness. The waters rise till the country is flooded for miles around and the only practicable means of transit is the canoe. Others more active engage in the labour of cutting wood for the river steamers. This is piled up by the bank and sold, at prices depending to a certain extent on the season, to the steam launches which ply in the navigable stretches. A prolonged or exceptional flood in the basin of the Lower Amazon occasions much scarcity and distress among the scattered population. Food

becomes difficult to obtain, and not infrequently families are reduced to *farinha* only for weeks or even months at a time.

Travelling in these parts is undertaken under varying conditions. To the launches and steamers reference has already been made. These ply on all navigable stretches of those rivers where there is sufficient population and business to justify the journey. They not only convey passengers and merchandise, but they are themselves travelling department stores selling all the lines which are most likely to be in demand. With the first rise of the water in the winter, they press up to the superior courses to collect the rubber which has accumulated in the dry season. Often they may have to wait several days owing to lack of water before they can continue the journey. Then comes a *repiquete* or sudden rise, followed by a slight pause or fall, and they will push up a short distance farther. Sometimes it happens that they run on a submerged log and serious damage is done. The pilotage is no easy task when the river is low. They say locally, 'All are pilots when the river is high.' But when there is scarcity of water, and at other times when navigation is difficult, the pilots will not proceed on a moonless night. A steamer may be caught upstream by the falling river and be condemned to spend six months in idleness, waiting for the succeeding flood. When the rains are at their height, progress against the current is slow, and stops for taking on wood as fuel frequent. The usual signal for summoning a passing *gaiola*, if a passenger wishes to embark, is two shots of the rifle.

For local journeys, and in parts where there are no other facilities available, the canoe is pressed into service. The dugout canoe is not generally seen in

Brazil, but in Peru and Bolivia it is common enough. The ordinary canoe is known as a *montaria* or mount, for it serves the man of the river in place of a mule. Bark canoes, smaller than these, are sufficient for short journeys, and I once travelled hundreds of miles with all my baggage and one *caboclo* in such a craft. The *caboclo* and I could easily lift the canoe when necessary. Although the river was then at its height and the yellow flood was pouring down, laden with tree-trunks and derelict logs, we came to no harm. There are, of course, more ways than one of forcing a canoe up against a strong current, and poling or towing have often to be resorted to. It may be dangerous to tow a canoe over the shallows by wading, owing to the possibility of attack from the small fish known as the *piranha* in Brazil, so much dreaded because of its savage bite; or perhaps the sting-ray will be present. On such journeys baggage needs to be well protected from the rain by means of rubber-covered bags. A longer journey can be made in a *batelão* which requires several men to manage. In the stern of this a rude cabin is constructed by arranging a semicircular *tolda* or roof of palm branches.

When the rivers are interrupted by rapids or *cachoeiras*, the conditions are somewhat different. Transport in these cases becomes a serious problem. A large number of rapids, which appear threatening or even impassable to the visitor, lose their perilous character when it is known that they have been successfully negotiated for years by launches and canoes, and that pilots can be obtained who have expert knowledge of the channels. The peril involved in the passage of a rapid, whether in the ascent or descent of the river, depends largely on the season and on the degree to which its navigation is known.

Some rapids in times of flood merely become passages where the normal velocity of the current is somewhat accelerated. In the case of the gorges, where the river is confined between opposing walls of rock, as on the Marañon, the Huallaga and other affluents, the existence of excessive flood-pressure is precisely the factor which renders the passage dangerous. The difference in the two seasons, to be noted in the channels of rivers such as the Tocantins and the Xingú, whose course is littered with sandbanks and rocks, is so great that their actual identity might well be doubted. The sight of a broad and dangerous rapid in the dry season, when the stream, perhaps a mile in width, is pouring over the rocks with a solemn roar which can be heard from afar, is one which is not easily forgotten. Scenes witnessed in journeying in these parts serve to reveal the titanic struggle which is daily carried on in the overcoming of the immense obstacles which oppose the conquest of the Amazon basin. The small motor-launches that travel in such parts are equipped with powerful engines and often carry a winch and steel cable in the bows. They are heavily made to resist the constant blows on the rocks, and are manned by a crew of six to eight, or more. Day after day, perhaps, the journey will be delayed at one difficult passage. When the current becomes strong the men seize heavy poles and assist the motor. The pilot may stand on the top of the small cabin roof so as to detect more readily the existence of rocks beneath the water. On arriving at the critical passes, all cargo is carried over the portage and the launch taken up empty. The crew work the entire day in the water, hauling, pushing, plunging through foaming torrents to attach ropes to pinnacles of rock, gaining an inch and losing a yard, till, for no apparent

reason, the critical stage is suddenly conquered when, it may be, only a few hands are working. Passengers not infrequently assist, although the labour has its risks for the unaccustomed. In these parts they say, 'We shall not pass through purgatory, for we have already gone through it in the *cachoeiras*.' In risky situations much depends on the pilot. A serious accident I once witnessed occurred in this way. The crew to the number of ten, standing in the shallows above the fall, were hauling on the end of a rope. Little progress was being made and the pilot 'opened up' slightly, swinging the bow of the launch across the current. But the stern was in a *remanso* or backwater, and the craft was immediately swept over. The ten men were carried off their feet, and the hull fell on to a rock with a crash which was audible across the width of the river, perhaps a distance of 1,000 yards. As the pilot said, 'In descending the *cachoeiras* all the saints assist, but in ascending only God.' In the descent, therefore, one can claim sincere, if not expert, assistance. None the less, and perhaps especially in descending, accidents occur and are liable to be attended by serious consequences. When the river is high, violent and steep waves form over the rocks and the craft, whether canoe or launch, is thrown from one crest on to the next with alarming velocity. It is always advisable to avoid excitement. In strong currents it is necessary to place four or six men at the long tiller controlling the rudder, for the force of the current would defy the efforts of two or three with ease. The remainder of the crew stand in the bows ready to stave the boat off from disaster if at all possible. The more pious among the passengers produce their saints and fervently address themselves to cultivating their favour.

Amid settings such as these live the men and

women whose lives are passed in the contemplation of what to us are strange and unfamiliar scenes. The *caboclo* of the Amazon has his joys and sorrows, his superstitions and his folk-lore. Religious and devoted to the Church, the people here are not controlled by that bitter fanaticism which is characteristic of the arid wastes of Ceara and the north-east. The saints, however, retain their efficacy, although, if unresponsive in the rapids or when facing other crises, they are liable themselves to be consigned to watery graves. All through this region hospitality is the rule. Your neighbour's house, his lares and penates, his food and his family are always 'at your orders'. It would be false, however, to conceal the sterner side of the forest life. Those who have constantly to engage in such a relentless struggle themselves rapidly learn the methods of violence. Thus it is said, 'We do not respect the Constitution here; we have our own constitution and one article in it—Article 44 of the Winchester constitution.' Tragedy is never very far distant. Swallowed up in that mystery of gloom and green are the bones of unfortunate wretches who have been lost or died of fever far from human aid. That awful prison closed around, mocking their insignificance with derisive voices, holding out, by gleams of delusive light, the anticipation of some river-bank, some welcome clearing immediately ahead. They struggled through marshes in the reeking mud, their clothes torn to pieces among thorns, pitifully nourished by the latex licked from the bark of a *sorba* or milk-giving tree, fighting incessantly with the insistent swarms of tormenting *piums* or sandflies. At night they slung their hammocks and tossed restlessly, till with mock grandeur the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, and the rain poured down and chilled them to the bone. The

morning broke upon them, grasped in the embrace of a living death. The same gleam lured them on, ammunition exhausted, *farinha* gone, and the same *igapó*¹ sucked them down. The glassy stare of madness was in their eyes, the man was gone, the beast alone remained. By the morning the solemn drip among the trees was the only dirge sung in drab monotony to another and an anonymous death.

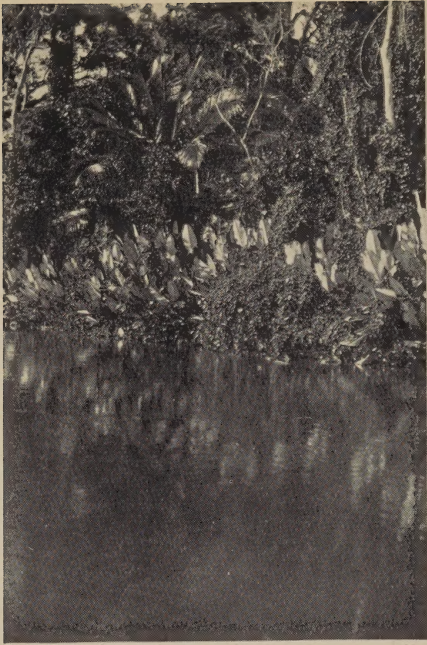
¹ The flooded stretches of forest.

CHAPTER II

THE ARTERIES OF THE FOREST

THE prevailing note in the Amazon region is that of monotony. The same green lines the river-banks, the same gloom fills the forest. For league after league, day after day of a weary journey, there is the same uniformity of appearance. To the average eye it is the homogeneity of nature all around that leaves the dominant impression. As each successive morning the traveller rolls up his hammock with the first light of day and proceeds on his journey, the trees and the undergrowth which block his path seem in no way essentially different to the obstacles of yesterday. Each successive bend in the river is rounded in expectancy, only to reveal another identical stretch ahead. Landmarks are absent, and there is nothing by which progress can be marked. To-morrow and the next day will tell the same story as yesterday and the day before.

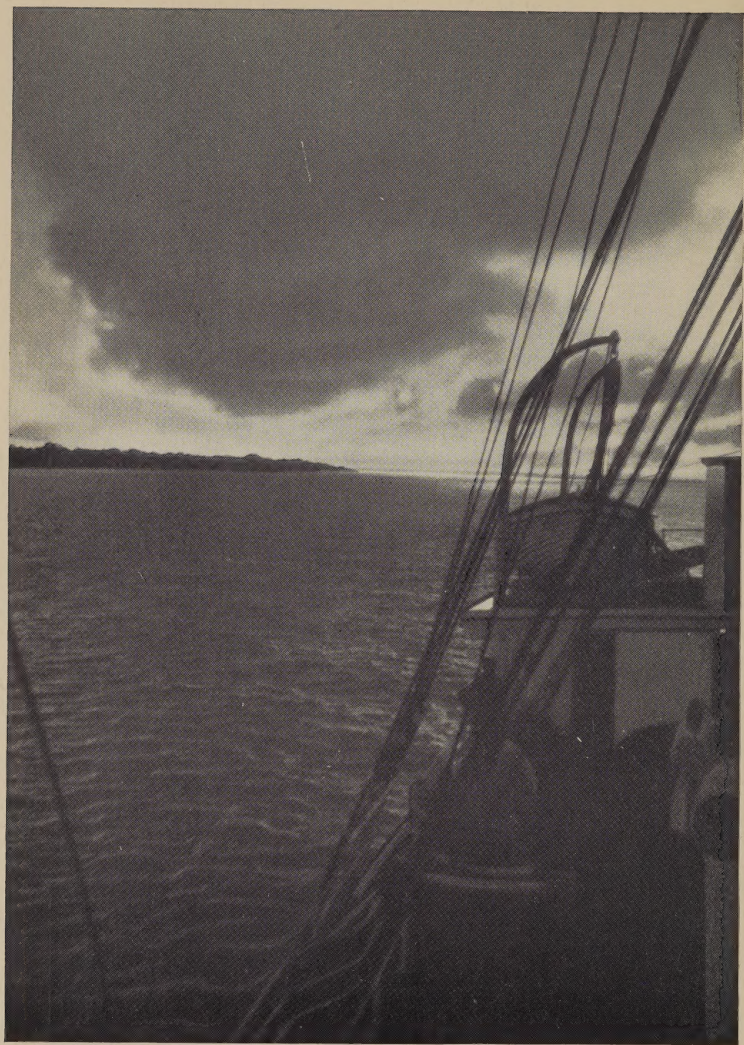
If this is true as a broad generalization, it is by no means the whole truth. The variety which exists needs for its detection either the eye of the specialist or the vision rendered expert by continued residence. To the *caboclo* every stretch of forest is different from its neighbours. By a hundred signs this *rancho* or camping-place of to-day differs from that of yesterday. Who could possibly confuse them? Almost inaudible noises and all but inappreciable signs conceal some occult but interpretable meaning. Every creek and every channel has its special



CREEPERS AND PALMS



AMONG THE RAPIDS OF THE R. XINGU



SUNSET AND COMING STORM ON THE LOWER AMAZON

advantages or disadvantages. Each successive season is different from that of the year before. The specialist sees a similar variety in every square yard. It has been stated that there are 10,000 ligneous species in the Amazon valley, of which three-quarters are vines and small trees. According to Le Cointe¹ it is easy to find two hundred different species on an area of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land.

The Amazon, or Amazons as the name should really be, rises in Peru and, after a course of some 4,000 miles, flows into the Atlantic in North Brazil. The great river presents different aspects over the various sections of its length. In the source region the snow-crowned peaks over 20,000 feet in height look down in disdain upon the infant stream. Carving its royal avenue of progress, it flows through profound and protecting valleys often some 10,000 feet in depth. Sometimes it cuts a passage through the mountains, the waters tumbling down a narrow gorge, the cliffs rising almost vertically for thousands of feet. Sometimes the slopes are more open and the current less tempestuous. At certain altitudes and over certain stretches the vegetation is dry and thorny. As the rain forests are approached, the smaller trees obtain a footing and the mass of parasites and epiphytes refuse to be ignored. The beautiful tree-ferns may be seen here in abundance. Over these stretches the current is swift, the river forces its way through successive ranges, and the hills close around, forming dangerous gorges. Finally, the mass of water breaks through triumphantly on to the level plain. In the case of the Marañon, the traditional source-branch of the Upper Amazon, this takes place at the Pongo de Manseriche. From this point to the ocean the drop is very slight, being about

¹ P. Le Cointe, *L'Amazonie Brésilienne*. Vol. ii. 1922. P. 7.

1 foot per every 5 miles. The forest assumes a characteristic appearance, and the life of the people takes on a defined type. The land is uniformly low, but at intervals steep bluffs, generally formed of red soil, project on to the river. Behind the immediate banks a low lagoon or swamp is often encountered. Four hundred and seventy-six miles below the Pongo de Manseriche is the town of Iquitos, with some 10,000 people, the centre of Peruvian Amazonia. Steamers from Europe periodically ascend to this point, 2,242 miles from the sea. Below this for a thousand miles is the Middle Amazon, known in Brazil as the Solimões. The banks are liable to inundation, but these floods do not penetrate as far inland as is popularly supposed. Here and there the high land impinges on the river, generally with a red layer of earth surmounting a close, greyish soil. The channel is interrupted by numerous islands and maintains a width of several miles. Side channels, known as *paraná*s or *furos*, leave or rejoin the river. A thousand miles from the mouth and 8 miles up the Negro tributary stands the town of Manaus, with its 40,000 people, a standard port for all *gaiolas* and ocean steamers which ascend the river. Below Manaus the main channel averages 3 to 8 miles in width, but on either side of this is a maze of 'by-passes', lakes, and islands, and in times of flood the downward current can be felt over a lateral distance of more than 30 miles. In all this region the proportion of high land is greater than that which obtains in the middle reaches. Low lines of hills are constantly in sight, particularly on the north bank. Here, too, are stretches of open grass land and plain. One hundred and sixty miles above Pará the river is broken up into innumerable channels known as the ⁵Narrows. Below this it opens out into

a great delta contained, itself, in an estuary filled with islands, of which the most important is Marajó, with an area of 17,650 square miles, or somewhat larger than Switzerland. A population of about 200,000 inhabits these islands. The western side of Marajó is largely low and dismal marsh land, but the eastern is somewhat higher and is composed of open plains on which graze some 500,000 head of cattle. The town of Pará, with its 180,000 people, stands on the southern shore of the estuary.

The Amazon can boast twenty-one tributaries more than 700 miles in length. Of these, eleven exceed 1,000 miles, and three pass the 2,000-mile mark. The longest and most useful of these affluents flow from south to north. To appreciate their utility it is necessary to note that they are not all navigable for equal or proportionate distances. The fall-line, or line joining the points of the first occurrence of rapids on the tributaries of the master-river, takes a very distinctive course. The tributaries which debouch into the Lower Amazon are navigable without obstruction for only a short distance of their total length. Thus on the Tocantins the first rapids occur 167 miles from the confluence, and on the Xingú, 145 miles. Proceeding westwards, this navigable stretch becomes longer and longer until rivers such as the Juruá and Purus are, in certain seasons of the year, unobstructed almost throughout their entire course. The navigable plain of the Amazon is, therefore, bottle-necked.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the Ucayali or the Marañon should be regarded as the true source of the main river. The two great tributaries east of the Ucayali are the Juruá and Purus. They are essentially similar in all main characteristics, and roughly parallel in their lower

and middle courses. They traverse great stretches of alluvial land of very slight elevation, large areas of which are generally inundated from January to March. These rivers flow in sinuous and sweeping curves known as *voltas*, interrupted occasionally by a long reach. Distances and journeys are regularly measured by the people with reference to these features, even when considerable intervals are in question. Thus you will constantly hear, 'So-and-so lives 25 *voltas* and 5 *estirões* (reaches) from here'. In the wet season the flood sometimes breaks across the neck of a bend, thus permitting a short-cut. In the dry months wide beaches of desiccated mud, resembling a grey sand, project from the points and considerably limit the width of the navigable channel. The upper course of these two rivers lies in what is known as the Acre Territory. An excellent quality of rubber is obtained from here, and, although distant geographically, the absence of hindrances to navigation renders the region more accessible than much of the land which lies in greater actual proximity to the axial stream. The climate is healthier than in almost any other part of the forest region. In spite of these advantages, considerable emigrations of population followed the ruin of the wild rubber industry in 1913.

The River Madeira is the greatest of all the Amazon tributaries, and it drains an area of about 500,000 square miles in Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru. This is equivalent to about half the area of British India. It is formed by the confluence of the Mamoré and Beni rivers of Bolivia, which in their turn receive important affluents. Immediately below the union of these rivers the Madeira plunges over a series of rapids, which extend over all the 230 miles between Santo Antonio and Guajara-mirim. There

are nineteen of these, involving a total drop of 475 feet, and some of them cannot be passed with safety by craft of any kind at any season of the year. Formerly, however, rubber from the Bolivian lowlands used to be exported over these *cachoeiras*. It is said that a large boat which would leave with twenty or thirty rowers would not infrequently arrive with half the crew drowned, and it is further alleged that the recruiting of Indians for this terrible labour decimated the indigenous population of Lower Bolivia. Up to Porto Velho, 661 miles from the confluence with the Amazon, the Madeira is freely navigable. The difference of level between the dry and wet season here amounts to about 50 feet, and 7,000-ton steamers have ascended to this point. The river is broad in these lower reaches, maintaining a width of one-half to two miles, flowing in long stretches and receiving various affluents, of which the most notable is the Aripuanã or Roosevelt.

The Madeira-Mamoré Railway has been built to provide transport round the rapids. The history of its construction was eventful. The first attempt to build the railway was made by Colonel George Earl Church and a British company in 1871 and was abandoned in 1873, the construction contractors complaining 'that the country was a charnel-house, their men dying off like flies, that the road ran through an inhospitable wilderness of swamp and porphyry ridges alternating, and that, with the command of all the capital in the world and half its population, it would be impossible to build the road'.¹ In 1879 another company was formed in Philadelphia and an expedition sailed for the Madeira. The enterprise finally resulted in one of

¹ Quoted in Neville B. Craig, *Recollections of an Ill-fated Expedition to the Headwaters of the Madeira River in Brazil*. 1907. P. 57.

the saddest tragedies that the region has witnessed in the last hundred years. Of 941 persons who sailed from the United States, 221 perished, 80 in a wreck off the coast of North Carolina, and the remainder under the rigours of the region, except in one case, when the death was due to attack by savages. Of the fate of many who tried to reach Pará on canoes or rafts nothing definite is known, and no record was kept of the mortality amongst the native labourers. The Madeira-Mamoré Railway was finally completed in 1912. It is said that every sleeper cost a life, a statement which is, perhaps, intended to convey a vivid impression of the conditions under which the enterprise was carried through rather than an assertion of ascertained exactness. But it cannot be maintained that the results in the development of Lower Bolivia, which its construction was expected to bring, have followed. Unfortunately the opening of the line coincided with the crisis in the wild rubber trade, and to-day only one train a week is run between the terminal points.

The rivers to the east of the Madeira are less known and utilized. They are all interrupted by rapids at a comparatively short distance above their mouths. The Tapajoz and Xingú rise in the heart of the State of Matto Grosso and flow through broken and mountainous country. They are both clear-water rivers, broad in their lower reaches below the rapids, exhibiting high banks and little or no flood land. The Tapajoz is the more picturesque of the two. In the dry season their beds appear to be an almost continuous waste of rock among which the various channels thread their way. The essential difference between them lies in the fact that on the Tapajoz commercial activity is concentrated in the zone below the first falls, but on the Xingú it is the

reverse that occurs. The lower Xingú is interrupted less than 200 miles from its mouth by a series of absolutely impassable cataracts. These difficulties have been surmounted by the construction of a motor-road and the boats and canoes used on the middle river and its tributaries are built above the lower rapids. Among the *cachoeiras* of the middle Xingú, and on a falling river, the *praga* or plague, as the local term goes, in other words the mosquitoes, *piums*, etc., is as virulent a torment as I have experienced anywhere else. There are at least two points at which a fairly easy traverse can be made by land to the basin of the Tapajoz. The two eastern rivers, the Tocantins and Araguaya, do not, according to many, belong to the Amazon system. They are both interrupted by rapids, of which the most famous is the Itaboca, some distance below their union. In their middle and upper courses they flow through country which, with the exception of a strip along the immediate banks, is largely open plain and grass land.

The northern tributaries of the Amazon are of less importance, but they may eventually prove of commercial value to the countries through whose territory they flow. In the far west are a number of streams varying from 300 to 750 miles in length and crossing the interiors of Ecuador and Peru. The Putumayo and the Caquetá, or Japurá, are major rivers, and they both rise in Colombia and enter the Amazon in Brazilian territory. The greater part of the course of the Putumayo has, since the agreement of 1927, marked the boundary between Colombia and Peru. This river affords unobstructed navigation in the flood seasons for small launches to Puerto Asis, 1,109 miles from the mouth and four days' journey from the important Andean town of

Pasto, in Colombia. The whole region was more extensively populated in the years previous to 1913 than to-day. The Caquetá, known in Brazil as the Japurá, is almost deserted over a large part of its course. It possesses the additional disadvantage of being seriously incumbered with rapids, of which the most celebrated is the dreaded Salto de Araraquara, a remarkable sight. Up from the mouth throughout Brazilian territory to a point 31 miles above the frontier, a total distance of 483 miles, it is freely navigable. Great care, however, is needed in the dry season, as the river then resembles a mass of sand intersected by tortuous channels, such as is left along some shores by the receding tide.

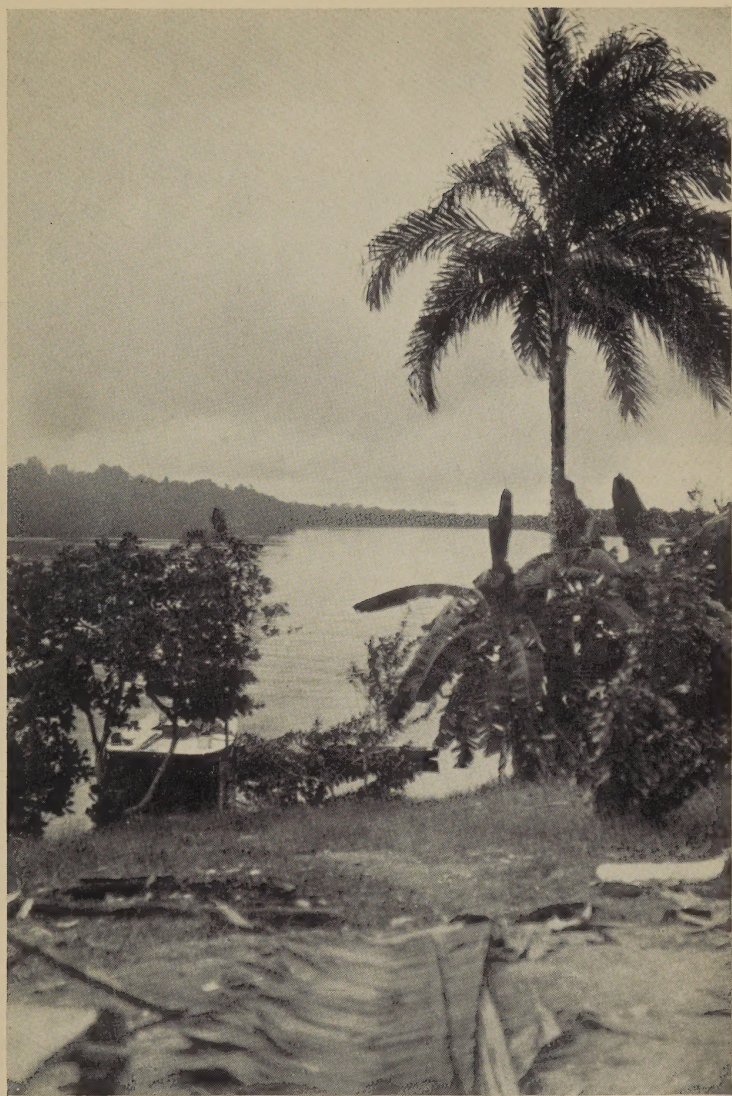
The River Negro holds a unique place among the Amazon tributaries. It is the great prototype of all 'black' water affluents. In this region the rivers are divided into two main groups, according to the colour of their waters. The 'white' rivers, of which the Purus and the Juruá are the most typical representatives, flow in successive curves, loops, and horseshoe bends. They are rich in suspended sediment and are the prime contributors to the formation of the great alluvial plains through which they pass. These bends exhibit a shelving beach on the convex side and a steep bank on the concave. The 'black' water rivers flow in straight stretches, and the vegetation on their banks is actually more varied, although conveying a darker and more uniform impression to the eye. The current is sluggish, and they tend to form stagnant lakes and lonely ponds. Their dark-hued flood, when calm and seen in the distance, reflects the light like the surface of a burnished shield. As a rule they are more unhealthy than their 'white' companions. Some rivers, such as the Xingú and Tapajoz, do not belong to either of

these classes, as their water is clear, being lacking both in sediment and colouring matter. A feature of the River Negro is the regular height of the forest along its banks. The river rises in Colombia under the name of the Guainia. On the left bank it receives some of the waters of the Orinoco, which pass through the Casiquiare, a natural canal uniting the two rivers. Both the Negro and its chief affluents, the Uaupes and the Isana, are interrupted by rapids. At São Gabriel there is a series of twenty-six of these, which are, however, passable. River steamers ascend to Santa Isabel, 473 miles from the north. In its lower course it receives the River Branco, flowing from the frontiers with Venezuela and British Guiana, where there are extensive plains. Formerly the Negro was the scene of great activity, many missions being established among the Indians. During the last fifty years, however, the river has become largely deserted and the small villages have fallen into almost complete somnolence. Near the mouth is the city of Manaus, the capital of the State of Amazonas. The tributaries of the north bank of the Amazon below the confluence of the Negro are only slightly known and almost unpopulated, whether by Indian tribes or civilized settlers.

The climate in all the region is nowhere characterized by excessive heat. The average annual temperature in Manaus is 81° F., with a rainfall of 65 inches, and at Pará 98 inches. These are low figures for a region situated astride the Equator. The seasons are two, the dry and the wet, known locally as the summer and the winter. Rainfall, and not differences in temperature, constitute the distinction between these seasons. The southern tributaries of the greater part of the course of the main stream experience their winter from November to

May. The rivers begin to rise at the commencement of this season, and by January they are generally in flood, the level continuing high until May, when they are usually falling. On the northern tributaries the reverse takes place, and the lowest period is generally January to February, the wet season lasting from March to September. In the upper regions the seasons are very erratic, and in the zone bordering on the mountains the streams respond to local falls of rain.

The dry season is the more pleasant for canoe travelling. In the case of the clear or 'black' water rivers, the beaches and rocks are uncovered at night and offer convenient ground for sleeping. The current is sluggish, the weather dry, and the heavens resplendent when the darkness falls. Often a rich harvest of turtles and eggs can be gathered by the wary along the *praïas* or beaches of sand. The game is more frequent in the forest and is found nearer the river-banks. In the height of the floods all this is changed. The wider rivers are then unbounded wastes of water. This can be seen vividly on the River Negro, which even 200 miles above its confluence with the Amazon measures 25 to 30 miles from bank to bank. Heavy logs and forest debris are swept down in such quantities as to form a danger to small craft. Houses are isolated and the country is under water, each home being raised up on piles and provided with a canoe. At such times it is possible to penetrate the forest with a boat and drift to and fro beneath the foliage. To leave the broad channel of the sunlit river and to enter the shade of the giant trees under these circumstances may be compared with stepping from a bright city square into the majestic gloom of a famous cathedral, and it has the same subduing



A CHANNEL OF THE R. NEGRO



A FOREST GROUP



THE REMNANT OF A TRIBE

effect upon the mind, so that it seems sacrilege to speak in anything but a whisper.

Sunsets on the waters of the Amazon combine the superlative glory of that spectacle in the tropics with the strange fascination of a novel and unusual setting. At Manaos the sun sinks over the mirror-black depths of the great Negro. As far as the eye can see to the west the river stretches away, finally closed in by low wooded islands whose contact with the water-line is broken by a curious refraction. The colours are repeated with faithful exactness in the glossy surface. Perhaps a solitary canoe is hasting homeward or a lazy fisherman crossing the river. In the Lower Amazon the sky seems to reveal softer but more beautiful effects. Clouds radiate from the west, bearing with them an intense and lingering glow. Even in the eastern sky the counter-light hesitates to succumb before the fast-approaching darkness. Gradually the shadows fall over the surrounding forest, low, perhaps, and hardly discernible in the distance. If you are near the bank the croak of the toads becomes insistent or the weird cry of the howling monkey. At a short distance from the land the peace is ineffable, interrupted only by the ripple or swirl of the current pressing past, or the rhythmic splash of the familiar paddle.

CHAPTER III

THE REMNANT THAT IS LEFT

THE story of the Amazon Indian is displayed against the background of the forest. From the great developments of the Inca civilization in the mountains of Peru the traveller passes over trails and through gorges into the level plains, where the forest reigns supreme. Practically nothing is known of the history of this region before the discovery. Some broad inferences may be made as to the probable emigrations and movements of the larger groups of tribes, but that is all. The four hundred years that have succeeded the first crossing of the Atlantic have added little to our knowledge of the remoter parts. Nevertheless, since Orellana descended the great river and was attacked by hordes of fighting women, the condition of many of the tribes has greatly changed, even if others remain comparatively unaffected by the advances of civilization.

The old story of the Indian and his wrongs need not be retold, for it can never be fully told. It is sufficient to say that to-day this people is not seen along the banks of the main river or its principal tributaries. The indigenous population of the Amazon was never large, and it has succumbed swiftly to influences which it could not resist. To-day the traveller can ascend from Pará to the Pongo de Manseriche, where the Marañon breaks through the Andes, without seeing a distinctively tribal Indian.

Many, of course, have become civilized and have married with the *caboclo* breed. The tribal life over the Brazilian interior is in its last stages of dissolution. On the central plateau of Matto Grosso there are a few units which can be said to be fairly numerous, but over the remaining area a group of a thousand strong is considered large. Many are reduced to small bands of fifty or a hundred and not infrequently one or two families. The days described by the old travellers, when fleets of canoes would shoot out of some concealed opening and the banks would be lined with picturesque warriors, have long since passed. These rivers are silent to-day, except for the lap of the waters along some deserted beach, the hoarse cry of the parrots or the call of the inambú. The past has gone, with its peoples, in Central Amazonia, leaving only that bitter sense of impotence, as of being present before a consuming conflagration and at the same time being powerless to assist.

Along the strip of forest immediately bordering on the Andean slopes, the Indian population is somewhat greater. The tribes are stronger, better organized, and are probably maintaining their numbers more consistently. Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia can all show examples of this. But, speaking generally, there is little hope for this section of the race as such. These groups are disappearing with such tragic swiftness that they are hardly being merged to any extent with the civilized folk. They die when the first contact is established, or perish through acts of violence. The Muras, who once controlled the main course of the Amazon for nearly a thousand miles, are well-nigh gone. They were formerly the scourge and terror of every expedition which sought to ascend the river, and official prayer was ordered by

the Church for their pacification. About a hundred years ago they were estimated at some 12,000 strong, but they are now reduced to a few hundreds. Some years ago I visited a small group of ninety, living under miserable conditions, naked and underdressed, harried by their enemies at one time, reaping the fruit of contact with the Christians at another. They have since passed into almost total extinction. The Barés of the River Negro have disappeared in a similar way. Barcellos, on that river, which they used to frequent, was formerly a flourishing mission, with 10,000 Indians living around. It is now a place of a few hundred *caboclos*. The Parintintins, who were only pacified in 1922, are on the same road to total disappearance, the results of trafficking with the Christian civilization of the River Madeira. Such instances could be multiplied indefinitely, but it would serve no useful purpose. The friend of the Indians travelling in these forests loses the sense of his own difficulties and petty trials in a profound sympathy for that unfortunate people whose dominions he is transgressing.

The causes of this decline in numbers have been various and resemble those which have precipitated similar situations in other parts of the world. In the background stands the significant fact that the entry of civilized man into the region affected even those tribes who did not themselves come in contact with him. The arms of the Christian were destructive and his capacity for slaughter unlimited. Wherever he went, even if he found no human game, he massacred the beasts and destroyed the turtle by thousands. The wild animals learned a new terror of man, fled into regions inaccessible even to the Indian, and a scarcity was created in this land, never over-indulgent to explorers of her wastes.

Doubtless this gradually affected the food supply of the Indian and his resistance to disease was lowered. Epidemics such as measles sweep off thousands of victims. Consumption seems to be found even among the remotest tribes. The influenza epidemic of 1918-19 ravaged the whole area from Bolivia to Venezuela. Such are the extremities to which the Indian is reduced that he has lost the will to live. He succumbs to dark forebodings, a silent melancholy, a consonance of spirit with the damp forest around. The end comes clothed in spectral despair, destitute of a single ray of hope. 'It is better to fall', they say, 'into the power of our spirits than into the hands of the Christians.'

Another form of activity has contributed to the reduction of these Indians, although its influence has probably been exaggerated. Atrocities and acts of violence have constantly been committed among them. Here, too, it would be an enterprise of little useful purpose to attempt to describe these in detail, and indeed it would need a considerable volume to discuss the whole question. Very often accounts of this or that massacre in the interior cannot, in the nature of the case, be substantiated by accurate evidence. It is sufficient to state the general truth, which no one who is at all acquainted with the real life of the region would deny. Those who still require information about the investigations made into the 'Putumayo atrocities' should refer to the Blue book published by H.M. Stationery Office in 1912. But these things were not confined to the Putumayo. To-day they are happily less common, and this may be attributed to various reasons. With the fall in the price of rubber there is no longer the incentive to secure labour at any cost, as there was in the past. The tribal Indians, being already reduced in number,

can no longer afford, even when enslaved, sufficient able-bodied men to make their capture worth the risk of the attempt. Such tribes as have retained their identity have in some cases become actively hostile against the whites and have proved intractable to all methods of reduction. The ordinary labour of subjugation of a tribe is carried out by means of the *correria* or hunt. The leading *patrões* or employers assemble from all the district and a count is made of how many hands may be available. The men bring their rifles and are handed out ammunition. They then proceed by arrangement to occupy positions around the given Indian village or communal place. They close on this at a predetermined time and fall on the defenceless Indians, preferably surprising them. The *correria* 'comes out well' if they are able to annex the men without bloodshed and carry them off, but if much bloodshed takes place it is 'an ugly thing', but apparently a necessary one. The actual procedure naturally varies from one place to another, but the rough outline conforms to type. The Indians are beasts and must be treated as such. Society, it should be explained, is divided into two strata, Christians and *bichos da matta*, or beasts of the forest. Christians are, of course, disciples of Christ, characterized by a boundless capacity for mercilessness, and are identical with the whole 'civilized' community. *Bichos* comprehend the tribal Indians without exception. Occasionally one meets members of an intermediate class. These are 'pagans' or Christians who have not been baptized. They are usually children, and the accident occurs when the family is living at a great distance from the nearest priest. Personally my best friends in Amazonia, and those who have been the greatest help to me in difficulties, have been beasts

of the forest. These atrocities have earned the wholesale condemnation of the Governments of the countries concerned, but in such an environment as Amazonia, and especially in the north-western region, where the boundaries of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru are relatively close to one another, it is exceedingly difficult to take any effective official action. Only in Brazil has real protection been extended to the Indian. This has been due to the initiative of Marshal Rondon, Commander-in-Chief of the Brazilian Army, and one of the most remarkable Brazilians of this generation. With an intimate personal knowledge of the interior his life has been dedicated to the vindication of the cause of the Brazilian Indian. The work is now under the charge of a Government department and splendid results have already been attained in the protection and education of these forest people. Article 219 of the regular instructions reads thus: 'It is not permissible for anyone in the Service of the Protection of the Indians to avoid any labour, any danger, any necessary sacrifice; so that although the blood of many victims may have to be freely shed by the dwellers of the forests, the sorrowful remembrance of their four centuries of martyrdom may be sufficient to inspire the true servants of this great cause with fresh energy and fresh devotion.'

Some actual experiences among the Indians of the interior are recorded from a recent journey in Chapters XII and XIII. It is a mistake to suppose that life among them is an exacting ordeal, demanding herculean strength or unusual judgment. It is, on the other hand, an admirable life for the common man as the processes involved are common. That is far from implying that the common man will penetrate the real meaning of Indian customs. Some

truly profound minds have failed even yet to do this. The bulky equipment of the modern scientific expedition is naturally an essential asset to thorough study, but I have generally had to travel in the interior with as much as I could carry on my back and no more. It must be emphasized again that the number of Indians living in Amazonia to-day under tribal organization must be less than 400,000. The significance of this degree of underpopulation can best be appreciated by imagining the populace of a town about the size of Sheffield to be scattered over the whole of Europe. Consequently it need not be imagined that even extensive travelling will bring anyone into contact with very large numbers of Indians. The greater majority of the tribes are sedentary. They hunt, fish, and trek over wide areas, but they do not change their habitat except in exceptional circumstances, such as the penetration of the white man or the spread of disease. Over most of Brazil their houses are known as *malocas*. The *maloca* is a communal house sheltering anything from ten to three hundred persons under one roof. They are of various shapes, sometimes round, sometimes rectangular, sometimes elliptical. Their internal arrangements differ in as many ways. Generally one family lives around its fire in a given corner or space, and the visitor, on arrival, is allocated a similar space. No barriers divide one family from another. This arrangement, however, is far from invariable. The hammock takes the place, as it does in many of the houses of the Christians, of all other chairs, stools, and bedsteads, although these may also be in evidence. Hammocks are usually made of fibre, often that quality known in Brazil as *embira*. The rest of the furniture consists in the main of clay pots, wooden mortars, and instruments of warfare.

All miscellaneous articles are generally hung from the beams or placed on platforms supported on the rafters. Sometimes the houses have walls, but the sides may be entirely open.

The Indians are often monogamous, but two or more wives may be kept, and within the same tribe anomalous conditions prevail. As a rule there is more marital fidelity among them than among the Christians. Indians have expressed to me their surprise when they have become cognizant, after a visit to some civilized settlement, of the real conditions prevailing among the whites. The families, however, are often very small and the infant mortality enormous. The absence in many *malocas* of a crowd of young and smiling children impresses itself forcibly on the visitor and augurs ill for the future. The affection of these simple people for their children is touching, and they frequently implore the traveller to do something to save an ailing infant. In addition to family duties, the wife is entrusted with agricultural occupations, probably because she stands as the symbol of fertility, and her presence at seed-time cannot therefore be anything but beneficial. Men and women wear a form of loin-cloth, although among some tribes both sexes go entirely naked. Hair-extracting ordeals are almost universal, and are perhaps undertaken to obviate the danger of evil spirits utilizing these aids to enter the body.

The universal crops planted are mandioca and maize, but many others may be found, such as potatoes of various kinds, sugar, and cotton. Feasts and dances celebrate the ripening of the fruits or gathering of crops, and of these perhaps the Yurupari mysteries of the tribes of the Uaupes, which have been described by several writers, are the best

known. Fish figures in the menu more commonly than meat. In the dry season fish can be poisoned in the stagnant pools among the rocks or in the marshes. This is done by taking a certain liana and beating it till the sap begins to exude. It is then thrown into the water, and the fish presently float inanimate on the surface. They are not harmed for eating purposes. In the wet season even the skill of the Indian may be taxed. Sometimes an imitation fish is made out of a piece of white bark, appropriately marked with black ash from the fire. This is then tied to the end of a long, thin rod. The Indian makes a rude platform among the trees in the *igapó*, and standing on this, holds the end of the stick between his toes, waving the artificial fish gently to and fro beneath the surface. As soon as the genuine article is attracted within reach out of curiosity or sympathy, he secures it with an arrow. Game is killed with the usual weapons, but a large animal requires the co-operation of a number of Indians. Thus the tapir is generally hunted when he is drinking by the river at night, and often it is the dogs that bring him down. The armadillo can be caught in the hand. All these creatures, including the monkey, the parrot, the crocodile, and various reptiles make excellent eating, as I can testify from experience.

Religious ideas hold a strong influence over the Indians. Many practices, which may seem either inexplicable or puerile, are to be explained as having essentially a religious connection. There are more things in the forest than the human eye can see. Those dark and endless leagues contain more than any explorer can reveal. The visible is only fully explained by the invisible. The Christianization of many Indians in the old Jesuit reductions has not

eradicated these ideas, and at the feasts of the Church the celebrants can be seen clothed in magnificent and elaborate feather-dresses and indulging in dances which clearly display a non-Christian origin. It is impossible to open up this vast and enthralling subject to any extent. Definite ideas about a Being supreme above all others, invested with omnipotence and inerrancy, are absent. Traces of such notions can often be attributed to the infiltration of Christian theology through the activities of the early missionaries. No clear belief in immortality can be gathered, though life after death is a profound and widespread conviction. The common Indian habit of burying the dead in a hunched-up position, with the head between or bowed over the knees, is perhaps due to a desire to imitate the position of the foetus in the maternal uterus. Thus the birth of the spirit into a wider, more shadowy, but none the less more really existent life is hastened on and precipitated. The supposed acquaintance of the medicine-man with all things religious and supernatural gives him not infrequently a greater authority in the tribe than the chief himself, who, in some groups, is little respected.

At all times, but particularly in the dry season, much time is spent in journeying. It is on these journeys that intimate pictures of the life of the people can be seen. Travelling in the flimsy bark canoes of the Indians is far from an unpleasant experience. Their 'ports' are often completely hidden from the bank, and it is possible to go up and down a river constantly without suspecting the presence of any *maloca* in the neighbourhood. The Indians travel at a great pace overland, along the most insignificant of paths, crossing the streams by a single slippery pole. But in spite of this they require

time to cover any given distance, as frequently there are delays for the sake of hunting or to make use of a good camping-place. Throughout the territory of their peregrinations the forest is intersected with paths, invisible though they may be to the stranger. At strategic points temporary shelters are built to pass the night. When a family is on the move the woman carries all the household goods, and perhaps one or two small children, leaving the man free to handle and use his arms. On approaching civilized houses the Indians will often and naturally exhibit symptoms of fear. In the rapids and gorges they are, as is well known, expert pilots, being trained to acquaintance with every rock in the river from boyhood.

There is a class of Indians which does not conform even to the above very general sketch. These are the nomadic tribes. They form a very small minority, and to-day are disappearing even more rapidly than their sedentary neighbours. Such are the Makú, who wander over the whole vast, unknown area between the River Negro and the Japurá. The Pirahán of the River Madeira are also of this type, but there are many others. These Indians do not indulge in any agriculture. It seems almost impossible to demonstrate to them that there could be any value in such an absurd pursuit as planting. Sometimes they make for themselves small shelters of the most rude and elementary type, and during the dry season they will come down and camp on the beaches. At other times they wander ceaselessly through the forest, throwing themselves down at night, naked and unprotected, among the leaves and ants, sleeping even through the showers of rain. They do not make these journeys with the object of arriving at any fixed destination, and a great part

of the day is consumed in collecting hard fruits and roots for their exiguous larders. They are despised and often enslaved by the surrounding and superior sedentary tribes, and they seem to have very little power of resistance, as they lack any cohesive sense of tribal organization. With many enemies among their own people, and regarded as a nuisance by the whites, they find life increasingly bitter, holding out fewer attractions to them with the passing years. So they, too, die out. Yet their fate is only the ultimate fate of many stronger tribes in this region of tragedy and death, their story only the same story of extinction and despair, with how many pages left untold and how many lines unwritten!

CHAPTER IV

THE LLANOS OF BOLIVIA

IN July 1928 I returned from a journey in the forests of the River Negro and set out for Bolivia. The route lay up the Madeira River to Porto Velho and over the Madeira-Mamoré Railway to Guajara-mirim. At this place, within hearing of the dreaded rapids of the Madeira, the navigation of the River Mamoré commences. I embarked on a stern-wheeler and set out on the journey upstream. It was the dry season and the river was shallow but flowing always in wide stretches, which revealed a lack of any very distinctive features. The weather was close and steaming, and a vaporous haze hung in the air. On one bank or on the other extensive beaches of white sand shelved into the stream. There was little terra firma in the immediate vicinity of the river, and in the winter enormous areas are inundated, the water being unable to discharge in sufficient volume over the rapids of the Madeira. Thin, insignificant trees and innumerable grasses and reeds lined the banks. In slight depressions in the immediate hinterland stagnant lakes can be found even at this season. Animal life is fairly frequent. Tapirs are not uncommonly seen in the early morning. Crocodiles laze in numbers on the mud-flats and around the fallen trunks. On the prostrate logs tortoises, a dozen at a time, sit sunning themselves, only to drop into the river like animated stones on

any disturbance. Houses were few and far between. As a region it was essentially different from the lower basin of the Madeira. The fringe of forest along the rivers is only, so to speak, superficial. The vast lands between these tributaries are nearly all open plain, constituting the Bolivian llanos. Lakes and marshes are found at intervals, and such spots are the haunts of flocks of wildfowl. A large number of semi-savage cattle roam these lands, and some thirty thousand head have recently been rounded up. During the rains the country is a shallow inland sea, but in the dry season over some trails it is abundantly possible to suffer for lack of water.

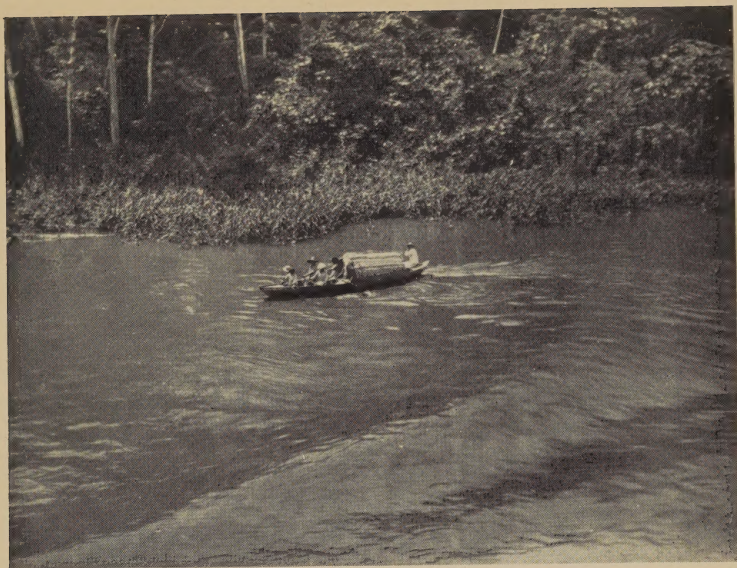
By the evening of July 25th we had arrived at Santa Ana, a short distance up the River Yacumá. On the following day there was much bustle and stir at an early hour. All sorts and conditions of men came and went, each thinking himself more important than his predecessors. I was discovered presently by a Canadian. After drifting round South America, he had found a job in this out-of-the-way spot as agent of one of the Bolivian firms here. I accompanied him to his house, and the walk to the little town was interesting. We passed along a sandy track over a somewhat featureless plain, dotted with low shrubs, isolated trees, and a few palms, among which were concealed lakes of varying dimensions. Cattle were wandering here and there, and creaky old carts hauled by a pair of oxen groaned along the rutty track, while the more respectable society, to which I did not belong, went about on horseback. In the wet season the steamer can come a mile nearer the town.

Santa Ana is a place of some two thousand souls. The principal and almost sole business is in cattle and hides. We are well out of the rubber country

now and in the heart of the llanos, the Llanos de Mojos. The village, which in these parts can be euphemistically called a town, was formerly one of the famous and flourishing Jesuit missions of Lower Bolivia and rapidly became a centre for the Indian tribes. To-day about half the population of the neighbourhood are Mobimas, of whom there are others scattered over the country. They understand Spanish, but rarely speak it among themselves, and the women generally deny any acquaintance with the language of the conqueror.

July 26th was the feast of Santa Ana, the patron saint of the little place. Such occasions are always of outstanding interest, especially when Indians form a considerable proportion of the population. It was the greatest feast of the year, and consequently a religious and social event of the first importance. The town took on a gala appearance from the earliest hours. About 11 a.m. proceedings opened with Mass in the church. The priest was an old, decrepit-looking individual, and when at the altar his voice was even more inaudible than is generally the case on such occasions. The church was a wide, low, barn-like structure about 40 yards long, with eleven pillars down each side. There was a pulpit, and at the chancel-steps two large images, one of the Virgin and the other of St. Joseph. Just inside the door were wooden images of saints, unknown to me by their personal likeness, of crude and obviously local manufacture. The floor of the church was of native mud and, except for some benches in front, was innocent of accessories for congregational convenience.

The white population sat on the benches. There was a choir of male voices, rustic, raucous, and out of tune. Music was supplied by the persistent offices



MAKING GOOD HEADWAY



A BURNT DWELLING OF THE WAIKA INDIANS



THE MACHETEROS



THE FEAST OF SANTA ANA

of an invisible and ailing violin. Behind the whites were the Indians. The women squatted on the ground, alone or surrounded by their children. Their dresses were all of one type, long garments hanging from the shoulder voluminously right down to the feet. But the variety of colours made a kaleidoscopic display, like the blazing signs in Broadway or Piccadilly, the insignia of a civilization distant from this by an infinite remove. Violent hues were everywhere exhibited with the most brilliant contrasts. Gaudy ribbons were freely employed to enhance the effect. Their coarse, perfectly black and typically Indian hair was well greased and divided into two pig-tails, which, tethered by ribbons, hung down their backs. A few carried their hair loose and flowing. All widows were in sombre black. The men stood round in the aisles and by the doors. They had invested their confidence in shirts and trousers, and carried in their hands their hats, which were decorated with ribbons, and adjusted, when out of doors, at fantastic angles.

Just inside the church door was a man with a drum and another with a flute, made, apparently, from the tibia of a horse's leg. At a given signal from an Indian who was posted as master of musical ceremonies, they performed upon their instruments by way of stimulation to the ambitions of the violinist. The priest was assisted by two Indians serving at the altar. Outside the church were lined up six men, in two parallel rows. On their heads they carried choice head-dresses of the feathers of the lovely parrot known in Brazil as the *arara*. Bells were tied round their legs, and they were accompanied by flute and drummers. Each man, in his right hand, wielded a long wooden bush-knife. They were known as *macheteros* (*machete*, bush-

knife). Their leader was dressed like a proverbial priest. He was an oldish man and looked somewhat like one's mental picture of Melchizedek. He was dressed solely and exclusively in a long white tunic. A staid and respectable Anglican parson divested of his shoes and socks, his shirt and collar, with his external deficiencies merely concealed by a surplice, might have played the part to perfection. At given intervals, by co-operation with those within the church, the *macheteros* performed their dance, led by Melchizedek. The dance was most interesting and complicated, but in broad outline consisted of much swinging of *machetes* and repeated gyrations round each other. The music was limited to the unvaried repetition of three penetrating notes.

Whatever the religious worth of this performance, it was at least a revealer of comparative values. It showed the Indian's love of the spectacular and the exhibition dress parade. The connection of such a display with a Christian feast served to reveal the essential conservatism of his nature and the ineradicability of ancient customs even within the shrine and on the precincts of his embraced religion. Finally, I could not help reflecting on the complete failure of Christianity as known in these parts to provide any ideal more elevating than those which the Indians themselves had been pursuing in countless feasts and ceremonies previous to acquiring the veneer of a new and more complicated faith.

Inside the church it was quite obvious that none of the Indians, and perhaps few of the whites, had any intelligent appreciation of what was going on. The image of the Blessed Virgin appealed to the women and they prayed towards it. But the manifold manipulations of the priest composed a mystery whose very distance and intangibility excused them

from the necessity of comprehension. Whether what they were beholding was the embodiment of a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit, or whether they were, in very deed and truth, spectators of the offering at the hands of erring and sinful man of the actual Body and Blood of the Son of God as a sacrifice for the living and the dead, it was forcibly evident that it was all one and the same thing to them. And thus for nearly three hundred years has the Mass been celebrated in the Indian churches of Lower Bolivia and the Llanos de Mojos.

Mass concluded, a procession was formed, headed by the *macheteros*. The two great images were carried round the village plaza or square. That of the Virgin was placed successively in the four thrones prepared for it, one at each corner. We then dispersed, but at 4 p.m. there was a beating of drums and a general stir. A bull tournament was to take place. A ring about 150 yards by 30 yards had been fenced off in front of the principal houses of the public square. The company assembled soon. Groups of Indian dancers perambulated up and down the ring with coloured handkerchiefs in their hands and accompanied by a musician with an old accordion or flute. Every third man had a bottle of *aguardiente* or *chicha* under his arm, and in every three the first, the second, and the bearer of the bottle were hopelessly drunk. Costumes were as brilliant as in the morning, and a favourite decoration for men and women was a small mirror arranged in the hat.

There were several restive young bulls tethered up. The Indians mount one or other of these, bare-back, and see who can stick on longest, the bull being baited by the company with red cloths and blankets. It is said that men are frequently killed, and it is not difficult to credit the statement. Any

Indian thus killed, however, automatically inherits immediate bliss, for he goes straight to heaven, inebriate or sober, to be welcomed by Santa Ana herself. This, at least, is the prevailing belief. Consequently there is no lack of volunteers for immolation. The first bull, being young and active, got away without any hesitation on being loosed before anyone could mount him, broke down the fence and cleared the town in less than no time, an excited and miscellaneous crowd tearing after him and shouting for horses. Some of the Indians hung on well while the other bulls rushed up and down the ring, infuriated by the gentry with cloths and blankets. Other riders were thrown immediately. In the corners and at the ends groups of besotted dancers continued to fall over each other till the shouts of the crowd warned them that the animal was near. One man was caught and tossed high. He fell and was tossed again and again before the bull could be driven off. He was covered with blood and was dragged out by the spectators totally unconscious. I do not know if he was killed or not. This sort of mild amusement continued with other minor casualties till the setting of the sun, when the *macheteros* executed a final dance.

The Church, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, outside of which there is no salvation possible to man, controls this country from end to end. Such is the degree of moral elevation to which her adherents have risen in this region where, since the sixteenth century, she has been the only spiritual power of any prestige whatever. There was not an Indian, perhaps, in that village who would not have fervently claimed to belong to the company of the faithful. For the little town on the Yacumá, the festival of Santa Ana is the greatest religious feast of the year. How much

gambling and drunkenness was indulged in, how many crimes, murders, and minor felonies were committed during the three days of the feast, I do not know. But had they not, in the old church, seen that very morning the whole Body and Blood, substance and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ elevated before their eyes, and had they not repeatedly called upon their queenly mediatrix in the sacred Latin tongue to intercede for them in heaven?

On the following Sunday, July 29th, we arrived in Trinidad, the capital of the Beni. The place itself stands 5 miles from the bank of the river, where it is represented by a collection of huts known as Puerto Ballivián. Trinidad was formerly a pivotal point in the organization of the lowland Jesuit and Franciscan reductions. The Mojo Indians were one of the most numerous tribes of the region, and they still compose the bulk of the Indian population. All through the preceding day it had been close and steaming on the Mamoré. The water in the ship's cold-water tank (which, by intelligent arrangement, was placed on top of the *tolda*) was 104° F., and in this temperature I developed my films. Throughout the night it was foggy and oppressive. But when we arrived at Puerto Ballivián the thermometer was falling rapidly and the sky was overcast. Our baggage was just conveniently scattered about the banks when the rain fell in torrents. The sand and dust, which a moment before had been blowing in one's eyes, were speedily converted into seas of mud and sloughs, which engulfed the men up to their knees. With much gesticulation we secured for our baggage the privilege of being thrown on to a cart and covered with a hide. The thermometer stood at 47° F. and one's sensations by way of contrast were polar.

When the rain stopped in the afternoon, three of us embarked in a cart for the passage across the plains, as the wind was too biting for horseback. This sudden descent into the climate of the Temperate Zone is characteristic of the region. It is caused by the wind from the chilly heights of the Andes sweeping unopposed over the level and open llanos. Such cold spells in Trinidad generally last three or four days. The cart which undertook our transport belonged to a type which I do not suppose has changed for the last four hundred years. Such stagnancy can be understood in China, but something more eloquent of progress may be expected from a nation the wealth and adornment of whose churches proclaims the steadfastness of its adhesion to Christianity. The bottom of the cart was made of bamboos loosely laid across the beams. The yoke was a simple beam of wood, crudely adapted to the joint physique of a pair of oxen. The top-works were formed of bent poles and hides lashed together. The wheels were roughly hewn out of solid wood and the axles secured with wooden pins. Thongs of hide and more wooden pins prevented the ensemble from going into involuntary disintegration. Two yoke of oxen were attached to the chariot, and we sallied forth in a groaning, vocal, and decidedly hesitant perambulation across the plains. The road or track was an abomination of viability consecrated to the service of itinerating mankind. The morning's rain had effectually transformed it into a series of bogs, swamps, and minor lakes, where the charioteer volubly admonished the oxen, and where we feverishly calculated the degree of shock necessary to produce a simple fracture in any given bone of the human skeleton. We lumbered along to the constant accompaniment of 'Huí-huí-huí, wuss-wuss-

wuss-wussáh', from the driver of the combination. The plain was dead-level, sprinkled at intervals with stunted trees and shrubs. The wind was bitter and insistent, whistling through the cracks and holes in the covering of hides.

The Hôtel Central, Trinidad, offered coffee and a passenger park. The latter was composed of an intolerable barrack-like shed with a stone floor and plaster walls, and with sufficiently small windows and a sufficiently low veranda outside effectively to exclude all light by day, at least, for reading purposes. The Grand Inquisitor and 'patron' of the hotel personally conducted me to the dungeon, expelling a vagrant pig on the threshold, and with noble words encouraging me to brave a turkey in the passage. My stay in Trinidad was too chilly to be pleasant. The thermometer fell to 43° F., but rose slightly on Tuesday afternoon. The wind whistled and howled through the cracks and crannies of our residence so that real strategy lay in keeping to leeward of the pig. There were few people in the street, and the Indians went about wrapped up to the nose in their ponchos. From a grey, metallic sky fell intermittent showers of driving rain. I changed my residence on the Tuesday, after having discovered that the gentleman sharing the shed with me was an accomplished murderer of the more respectable class.

Trinidad is the capital of the enormous department of El Beni. It is an old town of about seven thousand people, built on and developed from one of the former 'reductions' or missions among the Indians. The houses, with few exceptions, were low, ground-floor structures with verandas projecting over the pavement, supported by crude and bulging pillars. In all the reductions it used to be the boast

of the padres that it was possible to pass from one house to the other without getting wet. Most of the houses were made of clay, lime, and plaster, with tiled roofs, while not a few were constructed of bricks. The new church was in building. It was an ambitious structure of brick with a dome after the manner of an Italian *duomo*. The windows were small, and the aisles marked off with lofty arches supported on pillars. The town boasts the usual conveniences or inconveniences met with in such places. Prices were high, 10 gallons of petrol costing £3. There was, of course, no running water and no drains. As in many interior towns of these republics, the roads gloried in a central ditch lined by an indefinite quantity of mud. All that was necessary to endow them with an up-to-date camber was to invert them. At each corner circular stumps of wood formed stepping-stones across the street and at the same time allowed the passage of the ox-carts.

Among the companionable people at Trinidad the most interesting was Padre Catalán, Prefect of the Franciscan missions. When seated in his patio a small black bird used to perch on his hat and assist in the conversation, and the connection of ideas brought the saintly Francis himself vividly to mind. He endorsed the common opinion that the Jesuits undoubtedly had accumulated considerable wealth in the missions of their Order, but asserted that the amounts were absurdly over-exaggerated in the popular mind. Presently he rose and took me into a locked room in the centre of the house. In it were a quantity of ecclesiastical vessels and plaques, to judge by their weight, of fairly pure silver. Some of these were beautifully decorated with intricate patterns. The vessels in the same way had been fashioned with remarkable grace and delicacy. There

were between fifty and a hundred pieces in all. They had been found in the old Jesuit church here and in San Pedro, not very far away, when the Franciscan padres arrived seven years ago to revive the work abandoned since 1767, when the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spanish colonies was ordered. We then crossed a yard together and entered another room, where two Indians were working and conversing in the Guarani tongue. They were silver-smiths, the trade, once learned in the Jesuit mission of Guarayos, having been handed down amongst them, in the heart of the vast interior, for 160 years. They were renovating and modelling some of the silver vessels, and one of them was doing pattern work of unusual skill. Their tools were of the most primitive order, yet there must be few places in South America where work of such admirable quality could be produced. In the church, heaped into corners, was a quantity of images, carved wood pillars, and ecclesiastical bric-à-brac found in the old Jesuit edifice. The images were crude beyond description, but represented skill under the conditions under which they were made. The work, however, was not up to the standards which can be seen in the old reductions of South Brazil and Paraguay. On the other hand, some of the panelling was excellently done. Such care and skill had been bestowed that, had it not suffered from exposure and lack of attention, it would have been valued for decoration in any church to-day. The remains of the former altar were there, with painted canvases of various scenes revealing more a capacity for taking infinite pains than the touch of true genius.

The next day was my last in Trinidad. In the evening I took a final walk through the little town. The chill had passed and a slight haze hung over

the ill-lit streets. The sky was unflecked by the merest cloud. The moon was near her full and was climbing towards her highest noon. I walked round the big plaza in front of the church. It was nearly deserted and only one *caballero* seated on a bench wished me good night. The Guarayo Indians, who had been at work all day in the church, had laid down their tools. Their hammocks were slung and their fires lit in the aisles and among the arches. Down at the end a group were conversing in the native Guarani around a bigger blaze. It was provocative of speculation to see them thus. For two hundred years from the conquest these Indians were the disciples of that system of the Jesuits to whose composition it is difficult to say whether ingenuity or devotion has made the most effective contribution. And behold them again, after the lapse of another period of almost identical length, raising with their own hands a colossal monument to that very ecclesiasticism whose conquests have been built upon their ingenuous submission!

CHAPTER V

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE PLAIN

THERE are various ways of making the journey from Trinidad to Santa Cruz. You can take the aeroplane to Cochabamba, and then another aeroplane back to Santa Cruz. This is the quickest way, although it is an emphatic case of following the two sides of the triangle. Failing this you can go overland by mule, which is the postal route. For various reasons, however, I preferred to go by river and animal. The journey took exactly three weeks, an exceptionally rapid time. I took advantage of the steamer going up to a point known as Nueva Esperanza, at the confluence of the Rio Grande. From there I went on in a flat-bottomed boat, by poling, to Puerto Velarde. From this place it was possible to get animals via Cuatro Ojos to Santa Cruz. The journey presents no difficulties to the traveller.

August 5th-8th I spent at Esperanza. The interesting event of these days was an unexpected encounter with the Siriono Indians. They are called, locally, Guarayos, but are not identical with the Indians from the old mission of that name. These Sirionos (Tsiriniés) probably include remnants of very primitive tribes differing in language and customs. They have been accused of great hostility against the whites, and if these accusations are not wholly founded, at least they have never submitted themselves to any regimen of civilization. I saw them

first on August 6th. Two of the women were down at the side of the river drawing water with an old battered saucepan. They were completely naked, destitute of the merest hint of any tegument. Two others came up and joined them. On walking up to the houses some more appeared with several children. The men were out cutting the sugar. They were of average height, being about 5 feet 6 inches, with very little difference between women and men. The women had their hair cut fairly short. Both sexes practised depilation to the extent of removing their eyebrows, but the hair on the genitals and elsewhere was allowed to grow. The men had some spasmodic tufts on their chin, but nothing you could call a beard. Their faces were broad and flat, the cheek-bone prominent, and the nose narrower than in many tribes. Some of them looked coarse and depraved. Their arms were not muscularly developed, and, as I surmised at the time and afterwards ascertained to be the case, they possessed no canoes. Their legs were normal and they impressed one as rather being capable of sustained physical endurance than of exceptional effort. The men, too, were entirely naked. Both they and the women had in some cases a cord tied round the leg below the knee, and some men had a similar ornament on the left wrist. One of the men, only, had his face dyed purple. They were extraordinarily pot-bellied, which, however, is nothing unusual. They seemed a jolly lot, typical tribal Indians, putting their arms around you and patting you on the back with a patronizing air of conscious superiority.

They appear to have no permanent dwelling-places, although it is said that they have plantations some distance inland. But to judge from their physique I should say they subsisted largely on the



RELICS OF THE JESUIT REDUCTION, TRINIDAD



LUNCH BY THE RIO GRANDE



REFLECTIONS

wild fruits and roots of the forest. About twenty minutes' walk back of the river they had a temporary hut. It was a very crude affair, made of branches of the *motacú* palm. Inside were four fire-places, and hammocks similar to those seen among certain tribes of Brazil, made apparently of 'civilized' string dyed with a deep purple dye, perhaps that known in Brazil as *urucu*. There were two or three saucepans in the hut and a number of baskets, but none of neat manufacture. Besides this the only implements were bows about 5 feet 6 inches long and arrows some 8 feet in length, pointed with hardwood and feathered. The next morning I found them engaged in consuming bits of half-putrid *charqui* (dried meat), which they merely tore off and threw on the fire among the ashes, pulling them out again and tearing them to pieces with their teeth. One little mite with very small incisors, who could not have been long weaned, was unable to prevent the savage-looking mongrel from snatching the bit out of her hand, and it fell to my lot to interpose in time to rescue the half-mauled delicacy. Such are the supreme delights of childhood among the Sirionos.

The next day we left, poling up against the stream. The current was strong and it would have been almost impossible to make much progress by any other manual means. The *chata*, or barge-like boat of about 25 feet long, carried a crew of eight men and a pilot. The men were armed with thick, straight stems about 12 feet long, cut from the *chuchu* reed. These they dropped in the mud and walked down the gunnel to the stern, and then repeated the process. We adhered as closely as possible to the bank to avoid the strength of the stream and to utilize the shallow water. When bends or obstacles forced us out we crossed to the other side with

paddles, losing ground heavily in the operation. Every now and then we would run on a sandbank or sunken log. Progress at the best was exceedingly slow and we averaged over the trip about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles per hour. The crew, like all crews, had its humorist, who punctuated the monotony with quasi-jocular remarks. It had also its elderly member, mercilessly ragged by the others, and two boys of fifteen, who worked throughout the day with the men. Meals consisted mostly of *masaco*, a substantial compound of green banana and *charqui*. It is not the custom in Bolivia to sleep in hammocks, and I was the only person who possessed one. No one, however, could afford to exist along this river without a mosquito-net, and those of my companions consisted mostly of old rags and shirt-tails sewn together.

Being the only passenger, I had the stern part of the *chata* to myself. The dust formed by the drying mud from the river soon permeates into all one's possessions. The tramp of the men causes a perennial rhythmic vibration. Overhanging branches and half-fallen trees bear menace of decapitation if not of more thorough destruction. On August 14th the *surro*, or cold south wind, came down from the hills again, having been preceded by two dull and overcast days. The thermometer varied between 45° and 48° F. It was impossible to keep really warm, the sense of contrast with the usual prevailing heat being too vividly present. At night the same problem arose. The wind sighed and howled through the forest which lined the river-banks, bending the trees and sadly punishing the *chonta* and *motacú* palms, which were everywhere. We sat round the big fire for some time, with the smoke blowing in our eyes, and this served to some extent to keep the mosquitoes at a distance. Turning in is thus accomplished: you

spread out a blanket in the hammock and, clothed in your coat and anything else handy, sit down on the edge of it. You then lie down, adjusting your person so that head and feet lie well within the limits of the blanket. Having successfully attained to this achievement, you envelop your feet in a towel, if you have one, and fold the blanket over them. This accomplished, you wrap it right round you and over your head. You then sleep. Feet under these conditions never seem to get really warm, and they are gradually drawn up further and further, till you can heat them up with one hand while you sleep with the other.

The land is all flooded in the rainy season, as in the lower Mamoré. There appeared to be very little terra firma. The vegetation even along the river was comparatively thin, interrupted by patches of plain and reedy marshes. The life of the forest does not enter into the daily interests of men in these parts as it does in Brazil. Game was still relatively plentiful. On every side in the soft, sticky earth were the tracks of animals, the puma, capivara, tapir, deer, wild boar, and others, and monkeys were plentiful. An interesting phenomenon can be witnessed towards sunset. A fish known as the *sábalu* is common, and, at that time of the day at least, swims very close to the surface. On the least disturbance it will jump out of the water and create a sensational splashing. On one occasion one jumped on board, although the sides of the *chata* were 2 feet 6 inches high. It was a handsome creature about 1 foot 3 inches in length with white and silvery scales. The nose was blunt, the mouth small, and the flesh made good eating. The men jump out in the shallows, when they are aware of their presence, and kill them by slashing round with bush-knives. Day after day on

this River Grande is passed without seeing any inhabitants, either civilized or of the tribal Indian class. But there is abundant evidence of former population. Rounding a bend, one of the men noticed a piece of clay vessel projecting out from the river-bank. Very soon from the same spot they had extracted a complete skull. We then unearthed the bottom of a large urn, supported on three low feet. In it there were what appeared to be a femur, a few miscellaneous bones, an upper incisor, and a lower molar tooth. Before I could interfere they had disinterred another similar vessel and were breaking it up, searching eagerly for buried silver, which, in Bolivia, popular imagination pictures to have been hidden in almost every ancient grave. The vessels were made from a black clay, probably procured somewhere lower down the river, coloured red, inside and out, with a simple circular line traced round at intervals. They were found about 6 feet below the present surface at the junction of the alluvial mud and the harder brown clay, and were originally, in all likelihood, at some distance from the river, which constantly changes its course. At several other points could be detected similar remains.

One day we stopped at midday at an abandoned hut known as Nuevo Guapay. Hardly had we arrived when a solitary Siriono brave appeared on the far bank. He was completely naked, but seemed to have some peculiar ornament in his hair which it was difficult to identify at a distance. He called to us repeatedly for *dulce* or sugar, and we signalled to him to swim across the river, as there was no canoe handy. This he was either unwilling or unable to do. We poled the *chata* over to the other side, but we could not get close in owing to the shallows, neither could we land because of the treacherous and

almost liquid mud. The Indian was nervous and obviously mistrustful. We motioned to him to come near, but he moved farther off and ran up to the top of the steep bank. We threw some pieces of molasses on to the hard mud, but he still remained in his covert among the trees. Finally, he broke away and disappeared into the forest. As soon as we had pushed into the middle of the river, he appeared again and collected the spoil. On a second approach he came down to the side of the *chata* but would not be lured on board. He went away signalling, apparently, that he would bring some friends. But some two hours later he reappeared alone. We crossed over and two of the men landed with some sugar for him. But he fled for the forest again and disappeared. We continued the ascent and the following day arrived at Puerto Velarde, where I secured mules for the remainder of the journey to Santa Cruz.

The plains of Central Bolivia stretch away in all directions around Santa Cruz. The rivers alone are fringed with a margin of forest. In the drainage area between the Beni, the Mamoré, and the Guaporé, along the old cart-track to Puerto Suarez on the Paraguay, and in the west to the foothills of the Andes, open land is the predominant feature. The grass is for the most part coarse and tufty, but along the brooks and streams and by the lakes and silent marshes there is generally an abundance of green pasture. Such spots with suitable pasture land close by are known as *pascanas*, and are chosen by the muleteers for the night's rest and encampment. There are always trees in sight. Generally these are low and stunted, but here and there a wood is found, partaking more of the character of the tropical forest. The *motacú* palm, which apparently yields no

useful product, is never far distant. The white track for carts and animals winds across the scene. Houses are few and far between, but a fair sprinkling of cattle is generally within sight. In the midday hours the heat is intense and it is the custom to call a halt from noon to 2 or 3 p.m. If there is moonlight night travelling has decided advantages.

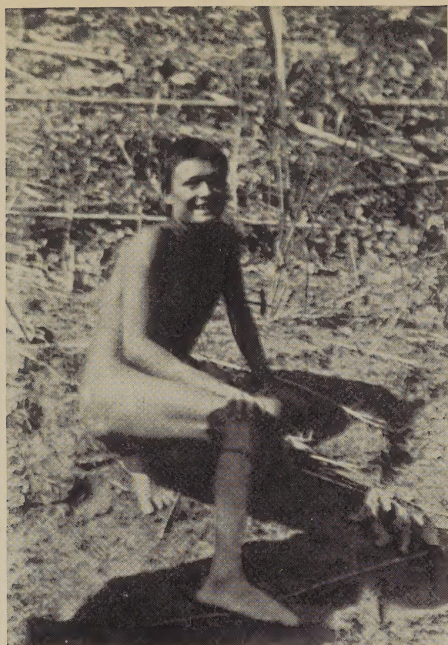
A typical stage of the journey made under these conditions was over the last leagues before arriving in Santa Cruz. We left Portachuelo, a small town of some 4,000 people, at 8.45 p.m. The night was irreproachable, and in spite of the brilliance of the moon beyond any of her rivals, the southern stars shone with a crystal and penetrating whiteness. A few birds called to each other across the plains, and at intervals we almost stumbled over the cattle that lay dozing in the middle of the track. One phenomenon was worthy of note. We seemed to pass from time to time through patches of atmosphere several degrees warmer than the stilly air of the immense depths around us. Here also was an unmistakable and delicate aroma like the burning of a refined yet natural incense. So far was this sensation from being a fruit of the imagination that on first experiencing it I remarked to the *arriero* (muleteer) that something must be on fire close at hand, but he had no explanation to offer. About 11 p.m. I was puzzled by an appearance as of a low, misty rime hanging, to all seeming, over the horizon ahead. I was, however, soon undeceived as to the cause of this unexpected impression. The path passed between a lane of ragged bushes and emerged in a shallow depression about $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 miles across. This depression was a miniature desert of sand, totally devoid of any vegetation. Across it ran a stream some 50 yards in width but only 2 or 3 inches in depth, while other

rivulets had wandered from the parent course and cut independent channels over the yielding bottom. This river was an affluent of the River Pirai. The animals crossed, the water rising but little over their hoofs, and trudged silently on through the white sand, firm in some places but in others drifting into mounds. The moon dominated the whole scene, which suggested more a caravan passing the water-courses of Persia than a modern journey in the heart of Latin America. At midnight we slept. The grass was drenched with the heavy dew and the heavens above unsullied and clean.

Santa Cruz de la Sierra is in the heart of the Bolivian Republic. Although isolated owing to the absence of communications, it is strategically situated with regard to the Amazon system in the north and the Argentine railway network in the south. To the east there is a cart-road to Puerto Suarez on the Paraguay, accessible to small steamers. To the west there are mule-tracks to the cities of Cochabamba and Sucre. It can be said, with a fair amount of accuracy, that it is the geographical centre of a vast region of Bolivia, whose resources, while probably considerable, have been little exploited, and whose interests have been wholly despised by successive Governments. The Cruceños, or people of Santa Cruz, themselves frequently confess that they would rather belong to Argentina than to Bolivia. The population has decreased of recent years and is now about 20,000. The town benefited considerably when rubber was giving money in the Beni region, but now business is largely paralysed. Inadequate means of transport are at the heart of the problem, but the road to the south will shortly be opened. Some houses import their goods through Puerto Suarez. The carts, however, take at least three months,

and have been known to occupy fourteen. Goods for any year, therefore, are ordered in the previous one, and novelties are, strictly speaking, unknown.

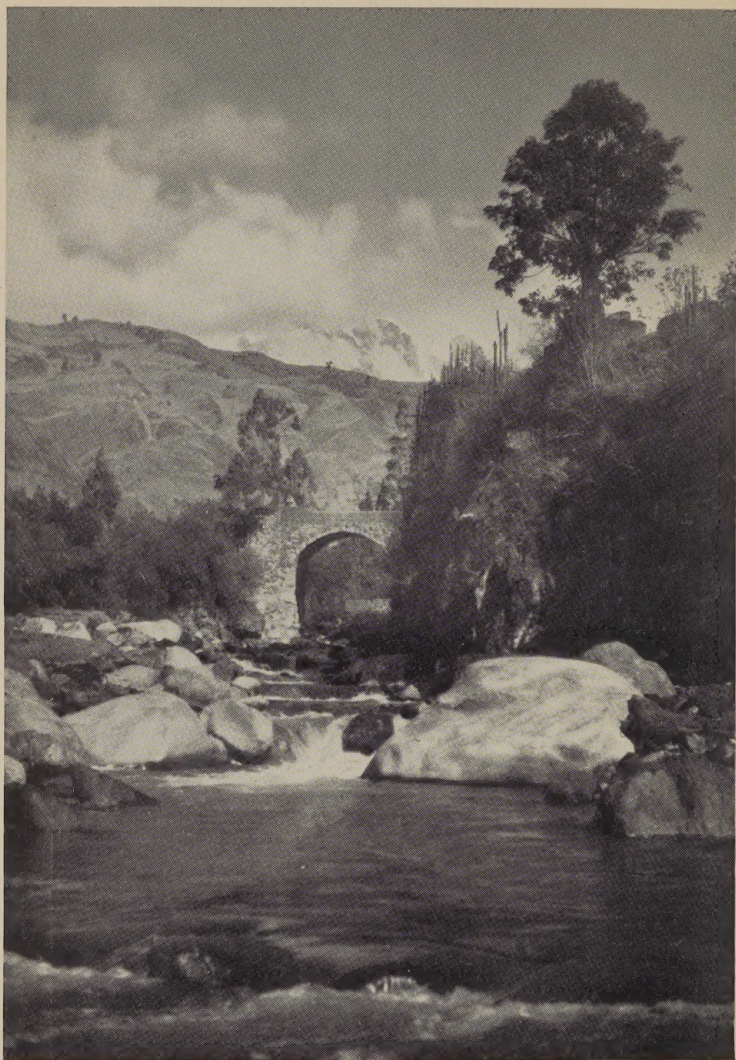
Lowland Bolivia is the interior region of a mediterranean land and is in every respect in a backward and chaotic condition. Public morality could not be at a lower ebb. The political arena has become the theatre of the meanest and most despicable displays. The patriotic genius is largely extinguished. The country is in dire need of more adequate communications and a more sapient attention to public works. But the funds which might otherwise have been devoted to such advances are absorbed in the multiple machinations of bureaucracy and in enriching the pockets of criminal wretches who assume a political office without a penny in their pockets but within a year accumulate fortunes of thousands of dollars. The vital energy of the community is thus continually sacrificed to the prosperity of the few. The common people, lacking the example of ennobling ideals in their leaders, have followed in the same paths. It would, perhaps, be difficult to find a place of this size in the New World where the population is so heartily abandoned to profligacy and prostitution. Women greatly outnumber men in the town. Vice and immorality have become but synonyms for normal and regular living. Pure women are as scarce and improbable as temperate men. Misdoing and criminal offences can neither be restrained nor effectively punished. I myself have been pointed out a criminal of social importance walking the streets while nominally serving a sentence of six months' imprisonment for a brutal murder. The majority of such cases, however, go unapprehended, and political influence or an open



A SIRIONO YOUTH



A STREET IN SANTA CRUZ



THE STREAMS AMONG THE ANDES

purse secures ready absolution. True friendship must be unknown in such an environment, and your best acquaintance may be your covert and most dangerous enemy. Recently there died in Santa Cruz a man of considerable wealth and position. Throughout his life and during his final illness he had been attended by the leading doctor of the city, his personal friend, who had charged no fees but who had received numerous gifts of value. On the death of his patient the physician sent in a bill to his family for life-services, threatening to distrain upon property failing payment, and remarking that if he had been a friend of the deceased, he was for that reason under no obligation to his widow and family.

It may be argued that such an attitude on the part of the writer denotes a Pharisaical conviction of moral superiority as well as a lack of respect for a people who only need time in order to take their place as one of the great nations of the New World. It would be exceedingly dangerous to assume such an attitude, and it is well to refer here to the reverse of the medal, as it appears to a Latin writer of note. He observes that in his opinion: 'Neither London nor New York lags behind Paris in the well-deserved reputation of being international centres of corruption. These cities greatly surpass Buenos Aires and Montevideo as exponents of the moral collapse from which the world is suffering. The dens of vice which are frequented by the wealthy classes, their temples of shame, bear the cyclopean seal of that same civilization of Babylonish contour which has created the skyscrapers. And if Paul of Tarsus, returned to life, should wish to describe this moneyed society, filthy and infamous, which gathers in them, offering up worship to gold and pleasure, he would have to use the same language with which he describes the

people of Rome.'¹ This may be true, but it does not exonerate the student from dealing with the problem whenever it arises in his knowledge. In travelling these regions I have never found that liberal and candid men resented a frank discussion of the issues so fraught with importance for the life of the nation.

Santa Cruz is a city of the lowlands, but, once clear of the town, gaze round into the west and south-west and there, towering over the green, level plain, the first mountain-ramparts of the Andean plateau of Bolivia rise grey, passionless, and vast. Here, then, was the true termination and final boundary to the humid and league-long lowlands of the Amazon. Here an ascent was possible into a new region where sterner climates and other life environments had brought men's minds under different influences. For 2,000 miles I had travelled through a valley of dimensions which staggered the imagination. The last mountains of any importance which I had seen were the foothills of that confused system of highlands which lie at the sources of the Orinoco and mark the northern limits of the Amazon basin. There the forest was dense, uncharted and unexplored. Here the plain was crossed in all directions by tracks and paths. But the same involuntary sigh of relief was on the lips at the realization of a limit to an expansion which had appeared illimitable. At last a break had occurred in that level monotony which oppressed the spirit. At last the conquest of that unrelenting denial of any point of vantage, from which a view over the whole in all its majestic proportions could be obtained, was achieved.

¹ Julio Navarro Monzó, *The Religious Problem in Latin American Culture*. Montevideo, 1925. Trans. W. E. Browning.

CHAPTER VI

THE COCHABAMBA VALLEY

THE aeroplane journey from Santa Cruz to Cochabamba is not entirely devoid of interest. The Company which operates this and other routes is known as the Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano, an enterprising and useful concern. Over this particular line a weekly flight is made, although for more than a fortnight after my arrival in Santa Cruz the weather prevented a departure. At that time there were only three safe landing-places between the two towns, a distance of some 250 miles, but this number has since been greatly increased. In the previous month an accident had taken place which had been fatal to all concerned without exception. The technical officers of the Company are Germans.

The aeroplane was of the mono variety. The minute cabin was calculated to contain as a maximum load four passengers, personal baggage being limited to 25 lb. A military officer, laden with an almost identical weight of medals and decorations, was my only companion. He was a portentous and petrifying sight in gold lace and braid, with numerous and sundry other accoutrements. A crowd of miscellaneous spectators and the inevitable small boy gathered from nowhere. The propeller was repeatedly swung to the accompaniment of reciprocal grunts between the Germans, and in an instant we were off the ground.

For the first time I began to grasp the true signi-

ficance of under-population. For 30 or 40 miles we flew over the level plain. On all sides it stretched away into the horizon except in the west, where rose, range upon range, the bleak mountains towards which we were flying. The plain appeared perfectly level from our altitude. At frequent intervals small homesteads and farms became visible where infinitesimal men were picking at the soil with the aid of pigmy animals. Santa Cruz, the metropolis of Lower Bolivia, had dwindled to a mere speck on an illimitable sea of green. The white tracks of the cart routes streaked across the llanos, converging on the city and radiating from it in a score of directions till they were lost in the grey remoteness of the distance. Some petty streams, whose crystal waters would finally merge in the turbid and yeasty flood of the Lower Amazon, wandered across the panorama. The day was bright and sunlit. A few clouds dotted the sky, and their shadows hurried over the plains beneath. A low, vague mist hung around the horizon.

Very soon we began to cross the foothills of the sierra. The nature of the country underwent an immediate change. The green and freshness of the tropical valleys was soon left behind. The hills were covered with a thin burnt grass, in many places interrupted by a coarse and clinging growth of low bushes and stunted trees. Rocks began to reveal themselves and barren patches of sandy soil. The successive spurs were divided, fold upon fold, by deep and precipitous cañons, in many of which flowed mountain torrents. It was perfectly evident, even to the layman, that in the event of necessity it would be quite impossible to make any kind of descent among the mountains. Only between the recurring ranges there were occasional broad and level spaces, with a sprinkling of farms or a small

village. But in many cases even here the nature of the ground-surface would not have allowed a safe descent.

The wind was high and blowing in our teeth. Evidently the aviators decided that under the circumstances we could not reach our destination, for we turned back and came down in one of the few natural spaces available for that purpose, near a village known as Vallegrande. We then learned that with the prevailing wind our petrol would not have held out till Cochabamba. We telegraphed to the latter place for a weather report, and, in spite of unsatisfactory news, resumed the journey shortly after 4 p.m. We did not strike a direct course but made a curve to the south to avoid the gorges, where the air-pockets were the most dangerous. We climbed to about 14,000 feet, getting on top of some of the clouds, though many passed above us. The plains had long since been left in the rear. All around were the bare, windswept hills. Precipitous chasms, wild, rocky slopes, razor-back ridges, and a few hardy goats barely distinguishable, characterized the scene. Shortly before 5 p.m., far away to the north-west, appeared the snow-clad peaks of the higher Andes. The declining sun lit them up with startling clearness and cast long, dark shadows into all the intermediate ravines. The cloud effects were exceptional. The wind was now blowing across our path, and away to the north a mass of white billowy cumulus seemed to have settled on the summits and shut out all the horizon. These clouds clung so close to the mountain configuration that it was difficult to distinguish them from the snow. They followed the slopes into the ravines as though the hills themselves needed the warmth of their protection. Straight ahead a black mass of storm-cloud drifted across our path

and blocked out the welcome sun. From its under side drooped mighty streamers of the same dark and ill-foreboding mists which swept the summits of the nearer hills and punished them with rain. We decided for prudence and altered course to leave the monster on one side.

Sunset under such conditions was striking. About 6.15 we began to fly over a wide and fertile valley at the head of which Cochabamba itself is situated. We were then steering direct into the west, and the sun began to sink behind the distant ranges ahead. The snow-capped monarchs to the north shone and sparkled with an almost otherworldly glory. The lower hills were lit up by aureoles of light and the ravines and gorges plunged in the deepest shadow. Over the summits in the east, above which we had passed, hung a crown of indefinable glow and colour. For minutes after the sun himself had disappeared the loftier peaks continued to reflect the fast-declining light. It was a fitting farewell to the vast interior, the fascination of the forest and the appeal of the plain.

Cochabamba stands at 8,000 feet in a valley among the hills. It has a population of about 40,000. Society in the Bolivian highlands is divided into three strata—the Indian, *cholo* or half-breed, and the white. Each of these classes has its distinct frontier and it is not done to trespass in an alien preserve. It must be confessed that the distinctions between them are more marked by the convention of clothes than by delicate tinges of the cutis. Perhaps in few parts of South America are clothes such an effective guarantee of racial connections. Both the Indian and the *cholo* rejoice in as many colours as Joseph. But remarkable indeed is the hat worn by the *chola* lady. It has the crown of the bowler and



CHOLAS AT COCHABAMBA



A BOLIVIAN SALESWOMAN



POTS



COCHABAMBA MARKET

the rim of a straw, and its defects are hidden under several layers of whitewash. The men wear ponchos, but the distinguishing garment of the women is the skirt. These may amount to a round dozen, each one worn over the other and slightly higher. Babies and merchandise are carried in a blanket on the back. Quichua is the language of the Indian, and commonly spoken by the *cholos* as well. The two occasions, *par excellence*, on which to study these people at their normal occupations are market-days and the *fiestas* of the Church.

Cleanliness is not a characteristic of the Quichua Indian. The annual bath is a stern reality and not a standard jest. There is an incident in the life of Henry Hawkins where a man had summoned his neighbour for nuisance, the nuisance in question being a smell in the back yard. The witness was a British navvy, and the cross-examining counsel, to throw ridicule on the case, got him to describe the smell according to its colour and so forth. The smells of Cochabamba need a descriptive faculty none the less ingenious. On one occasion I was out at a small meeting in a room in a town of the name of Quillacollo with Mr. Turnbull, a missionary in Cochabamba. In the intervals of devotion one could not avoid the involuntary study of conflicting olfactory sentiments. Away from the starboard, wafted on the breeze through the open door, came a nasal impression of doubtful pea-soup. In front, extending almost to the platform, was a fiery red challenger which carried all before it and could only be penetrated with a gas-mask. From the corner, surging onward like a Russian steam-roller, advanced a study in purples and threatening storm-grey. You felt racked and torn by rival emotions, not knowing to which enemy to succumb.

The houses of the people are made of adobes and are low, small, and dirty. They are, however, fairly provided with the necessary implements of life. The size and number of clay vessels to be seen is extraordinary. Near Cochabamba there is a garden wall entirely constructed of unbroken pots. Agricultural methods are somewhat primitive. The men use a plough entirely made of wood. It is single-handled and the operator stands to the left of the furrow and holds on with his right hand. But they seem to secure a fairly straight furrow for all that. This method is so engrained in the Indian's soul that firms who deal in such business are making modern ploughs with one handle only to sell in this market. They do their own weaving, and the process has been described in many works. The making of hats and of fireworks for saints' days were among the miscellaneous occupations I noticed at random. The prevalent drink sold is *chicha*, and it is elaborated thus: A man will be travelling into market taking with him maize. At each house along the way he stops and gives some to the women to chew. When they have chewed to saturation point or to the requisite degree of facial lassitude, he recovers the resulting product, pays the labourers with something edible, and proceeds to the next house and hands out more maize. The masticated and partially desiccated product is then brought into Cochabamba, where it pays a tax and is sold to third parties, who by a mere process of boiling and fermentation convert it into *chicha*, a highly intoxicating drink. It is said that no artificial process can substitute the accepted ritual in the quality of the final result. The filthier the hags that perform the masticatory office, the more tasty and attractive will be the final result. *Chicha*, in any event, is by no means an unpleasant

drink. Apparently there is some quality in human saliva that is very difficult to replace. In Cochabamba there are alleged to be more than 1,400 *chicha* bars. A Bolivian paper of repute says of this practice: 'The feast days come, the carnivals, the saints' days. Behind the squalid countenances of all the saints of the calendar, the people worship Bacchus, robust and rotund. Bacchus is the absolute and essential god. The national Bacchus differs greatly from the Greek Dionysus, smiling with the freshness of youth, crowned with foliage; with light eyes bright with life and seduction. Our Bacchus has not been born like the Greek god of the grape-cluster among the joys of the vineyard and the fresh air. He arises out of the tavern, from behind the closed door, beneath dense infected air, among the acidities and fermentation of the *chicha*—and thus our worship of Bacchus, which is supremely the national religion, demands the sacrifice of innocency, cleanliness, youth, homeliness, and of all feminine virtues.' ¹ Of the religious life of the Indians in general little need be said. A Bolivian writer of repute remarks: 'As for the religious practices, the Indians are very capricious and their ceremonies are not in accordance with the demands of the Catholic religion, with reference to which they only appreciate the facilities which it permits them for amusing themselves and getting drunk. Christianity has not penetrated the soul of the Indian for lack of serious teaching and of healthy example which those responsible for its propagation should offer them.' ² For many years the region has been in considerable isolation. With the building of the railway in 1921, however, this

¹ *La Patria*. Oruro. July 31, 1919. No. 121.

² M. Rigoberto Paredes, *Mitos, supersticiones y supervivencias populares de Bolivia*. La Paz. 1920. P. 237.

was altered. At the same time the Indian population has been well trained to fanaticism, while the climate is neither warm nor humid enough to lull the popular mind into indifference. The whole district is intensely agricultural, and the outlook of the people reflects the conservative tenacity of those whose minds are radicated to the soil.

Here the country is different from Santa Cruz. The bright green and the prevalent damp of the lowlands has been left far behind. The soil, except in the rainy season, is dry and readily crumbles into a fine dust which the wind does not hesitate to carry swirling through the village streets. By means of innumerable ditches and canals the Indians utilize all the available supplies of water. In some places artesian wells have been bored with marked success. Natural vegetation is at a premium and what is in evidence has mostly been planted. The valley is about 10 miles broad at Cochabamba. Closing it in on every side, except where it escapes into a hidden pass, are the ranges of the Andes, rearing their heads aloft to meet the sky. The topmost summits are touched with snow. In the sparkling and translucent atmosphere every detail is picked out with microscopic clearness. The broken skyline is so vividly distinct that each little peak seems standing out to taste for a moment the ample atmosphere of heaven itself. From time to time the silver clouds rise from behind the heights, crown the successive summits, and dissolve as mysteriously as they came. The vegetation on the mountain-side is a coarse and intermittent grass punctuated with low shrubs. Burnt to an autumn brown, it is easy to imagine that the view would suggest an inhospitable monotony. But it is rarely so. The air is chilly after 6 p.m., and gets colder towards the early dawn.

The stars shine with that peculiar and piercing brilliance which, in the tropics, is said to be characteristic of moderate and considerable altitudes. After scanning the familiar vault of the southern heaven, I remained with an impression as of St. Agnes' Eve. Jupiter was commanding the eastern sky, and later the Pleiades gradually became visible. But one and all, old acquaintances and new, they seemed cold and distant, unsympathizing and stern. With the sunrise a new world of colour awakens. A soft but regal purple spreads from behind the hills and creeps over the distant summits into the valley where the city stands. Gradually it is evident that the darkness is past, and almost simultaneously the Indian is going forth to his labour.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROOF OF THE NEW WORLD

A GREAT plateau supported on the two ranges of the Andes is the chief feature of the physical geography of Bolivia. It is 500 miles long, 80 broad, and maintains an elevation of some 12,000 feet. Due to this phenomenon the country has earned the title of the Tibet of the New World. It is known as the Altiplano. Embedded in it, in a deep basin 1,300 feet below the normal level, is situated the capital, La Paz. Farther north is the well-known Lake Titicaca, the highest body of fresh water commonly navigated in the world. On the Altiplano of Bolivia, more especially in the ruins of Tiahuanaco, it is generally considered that the cradle of South American civilization must be sought.

The elevated plains stretch away in all directions, bare or sandy, and in places covered with a tufty grass. The view is generally extensive and distant, but too often entirely colourless. Far-off hills with a thin mantle of snow shut in the horizon. The small villages and isolated huts so assimilate with the general environment that they appear as insignificant irregularities on a monotonous and unlimited surface. Rocks there are, crowning slight elevations, and summits often of soft stone, worn and furrowed into peculiar shapes. Across the plateau run a few shallow streams. Towards the south the desolation increases. For weary hours there is no sign of a dwelling-place, no evidence of agriculture, no trace of human



EVENING ON THE ALTIPLANO



HOMES IN ANDEAN BOLIVIA



FASHIONS IN HAIR, THE TITICACA PLAIT



A MOTOR ROAD IN BOLIVIA

habitation. Bare white sand or low hills fill the landscape. Dried pools lie in the depressions and sparkling deposits of borax and salt reflect the pitiless sunlight. Above 12,000 feet the yareta plant and ichu grass form the principal vegetation. The former is squat and cushion-shaped, clinging to the ground-level for shelter and protection like a rosette. The buds are well concealed in an outer armour of closely packed leaves. It has a spongy texture, evidently retaining moisture for a considerable time. The ichu grass is a coarse growth which appears in tufts and serves as fodder for the frugal llamas. Such are the uniform notes on which are rung the alternate changes of scenic monotony. Upon this region, as upon the weedy and forsaken Babylon of the prophet, the line of confusion has been outstretched and the stones of emptiness poured out. The cormorant and the bittern could possess it without any incongruity. Empty, void, and waste, it seemed to have been garnished by a spirit of destruction.

Indians are the principal inhabitants of these altitudes. To the north and around Lake Titicaca live the Aymaras, and to the south the Quichuas. The Aymaras are the earlier inhabitants of the region. Taciturn towards strangers, they are companionable among themselves. Many writers have noted their capacity for endurance, heightened, it is said, by the universally prevalent habit of chewing coca. They conserve among themselves a number of traditions and legends, and it cannot be said that Christianity has ever penetrated to the core of their being. Yet they are fanatical to an extreme. The innumerable feasts of the Church tax their meagre purses and their capacity for self-control to unreasonable limits. They have contributed to the

formation of the *cholo* breed to a considerably less degree than the Quichuas of Cochabamba and South Bolivia.

Round Lake Titicaca the men wear moderately civilized clothes. Their peaked and coloured caps have flaps to fold over their ears, a necessary protection against the biting winds of the Altiplano. Over their shoulders hang the folds of their ponchos. Another blanket will perhaps be round their necks. They split up their trousers for a short distance up the back seam to facilitate turning them up when crossing streams—a most sensible precaution. The women indulge in a multitude of skirts, as in the case of the Quichuas. A coloured blanket is worn round the neck and shoulders and their black hair tucked inside it. Babies, as usual, are borne on the back. Ear-rings form a common adornment, and hats, made of local wool and resembling a soft felt, perch on top of the head. Their chief joy is in a multitude of colour. A lady in whose immediate proximity I once found myself exhibited a baby slung in the following colours: brown, red, pink, orange, purple, mauve, brown-red, dull purple, grey, white, dark green, light green, light red, scarlet; and repeat.

In La Paz these Indians can be seen by the thousand, especially on Sunday market-days. In the Indian quarter the people crowd themselves into one-roomed mud huts, sell their wares upon the doorstep, keep their llamas and donkeys in unknown corners, and drink themselves drunk with the eternal *chicha*. The women sit on the edge of the pavement, their voluminous skirts spread out around them, their stock-in-trade displayed on some old and dirty blanket laid in front of them. Such a scene for colour it would be difficult to parallel. Brilliant reds and fiery yellows predominate, punctuated by many-

striped blankets in variegated blues and greys, by the white hats of the *cholas* and the ponchos of the men. Some sell cheap hardware and some combs, and so forth, but the majority deal in the products of the land. Innumerable varieties of potatoes, pepper, sack upon sack of coca leaves, various kinds of maize, and *alfalfa* (for animals) are common articles of business. Others purvey strange and repulsive-looking drinks, while others again deal in bread, and cook meals to be consumed, so to speak, upon the premises. Seaweed brought from the Chilean coast can be detected, used probably as a remedy against the prevalent goître.

Lake Titicaca stands at 12,500 feet altitude. At my first view of it the day was already declining. The evening was colourless and grey, but the view and the circumstances held me with an irrefragable attraction. This, then, was the revered centre of a civilization which antedated by long periods the coming of the Incas and the origin of which is lost in chasms of antiquity. The lake was always regarded as sacred among the Indians, and certain islands on it dedicated to the sun and moon are occupied now only by abandoned ruins. The shores were lined with a margin of reeds, among which, in snug corners, lay the *balsas* or boats of the Indians. The road wound over low hills and among a scattered group of habitations. Later, from my room in the mission at Guatajata, I looked out over the waste of water to the dim lines of the distant hills harmonizing with the declining light.

Those who have travelled in both regions have compared the setting of Lake Titicaca with the hill country of the Holy Land. It is not hard to appreciate the truth of this comparison, and many views recalled to me the descriptive passages of well-known

books. The same hills are here, rising in gentle slopes from the edge of the water, bare and russet-brown, as though they caught their colouring from the subtle morning light. A few trees are planted in groups, and the sheep nose comfortably here and there looking for pasture. On the roads, in twos and threes, the Aymaras urge on their animals, while others pick at the soil, heap the stones into immense piles, and plant their potatoes as they have done, and always did, long before the white conqueror made his dramatic appearance. The blue of a Palestinian sky is above, and the Syrian calm of Galilee rests upon the waters, till the afternoon winds or a sudden storm beats them into rebellious fury. The Indians' *balsas* are made of the *totoras* reeds lashed together, and along the shore they lie in little groups while the occupants are mending their nets.

The whole noble army of martyrs could be dispatched in Bolivia without a moment's hesitation. The soil everywhere is covered with stones. The higher you climb into the hills the more evident and common they become. All shapes and sizes are included. The Indians' fields testify to the same lapidary profligacy. They pick them patiently off the soil, use them for partitions, incorporate them into the mud walls of their own houses, or pile them into heaps which seem to occupy a large area of the fields themselves. No David could lack ammunition of any calibre for a moment. There is one consolation in the situation: if the dogs are savage, as they undoubtedly are, there is an abundance of missiles at hand with which to assume the offensive.

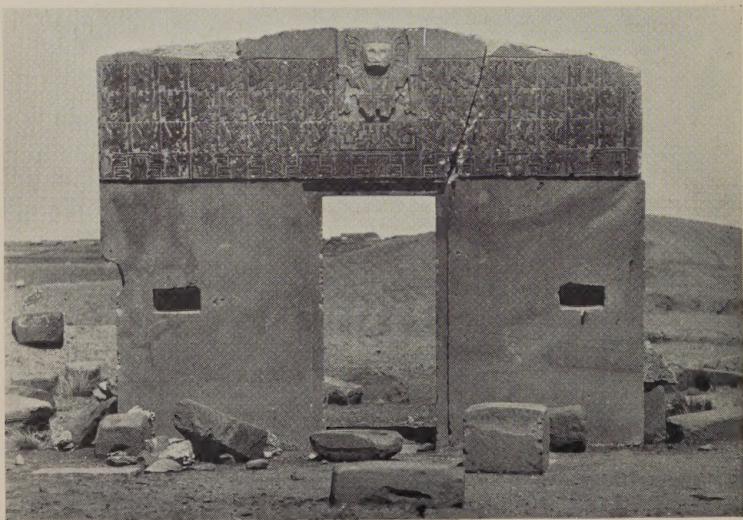
Among the most typical views obtainable from the lake is that from the heights overlooking the Straits of Tiquina. Here promontories press forward from either shore, and all navigation from Peru to



A SAFE PORT ON THE LAKE



TIAHUANACO, THE STONEHENGE OF SOUTH AMERICA



THE DOOR OF THE SUN AT TIAHUANACO

Bolivia must pass through the straits. It is a spot where a traveller can linger long without regret. We were on the summit of an isthmus which connected a bulking headland with the mainland itself. On one side it was possible to look out over the level blue of the surface of the lake to the lines of remote and misty hills. On the other a similar expanse was limited by island slopes and the confusion of a miniature archipelago. The coastal cliffs ran down to the water's edge in a series of steep, bold headlands reminiscent of the Devon coast to the west of Bolt Head. Straight in front the land descended to a fishing village with half a dozen masted boats. Pushing out from the opposite shore of the lake was the other promontory, its slopes terraced out, in the immemorial practice of the Indians, to utilize the surface for agriculture. The wind was cold and piercing. Behind, the eastern cordillera of the Andes rose into the perpetual snow. The waters far below were ruffled into savage foam as the mountain squalls swept over them. Of trees there were but few to be seen. Two or three hawks were circling overhead. A party of Indians pushed their donkeys painfully along the road. A small white flower grew in the crevices of the rock, and I examined some mosses with interest but without the knowledge necessary to know if they were peculiar to that altitude. At 5 p.m. we reluctantly turned our faces homeward again. The light was failing and a few streaks of yellow and gold alone were enlivening the cloudy west. The blue of the waters was fast turning to grey. The islands became dark masses, every moment more faint and indistinct. One Indian alone remained in his boat, busied with a task essential, doubtless, to the labours of the morrow.

A few miles from the shore of the lake are the

ruins of Tiahuanaco. It is certain that the Incas knew nothing of the origin of these ruins. The place to-day is aglow with the phosphorescence of decay. One by one successive pictures rise from the depths of imagination and people the region with a nation of an industry and skill certainly unknown there to-day. Tiahuanaco covers several square miles. It must have been the capital and metropolis of a community organized on a princely scale. The ruins lie on both sides of the railway which passes through the place. On the north is the Temple of the Sun. The central edifice is clearly traceable with subsidiary courts at either end, and it might be termed the Stonehenge of South America. Weird and solemn monoliths stand erect and stare down upon you. The altar is there, a great square block of hollowed stone. Close outside the temple is an artificial mound about 100 yards long by 60 wide, on the top and the sides of which are scattered other immense rectangular blocks of stone. On the summit of the mound there was evidently at one time a small artificial lake. On the south side of the railway there are other and similar remains.

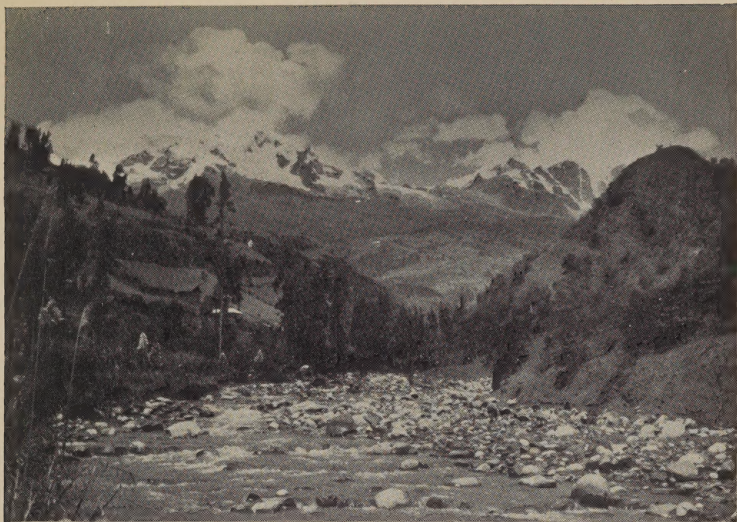
Some of the finest masonry of the New World may be seen here. The blocks of stone are of hard lava, shaped and smoothed so as to fit with mathematical exactness into each other without the use of trowel or mortar. Some of these blocks are said to weigh 70 or 80 tons. A millstone about 8 feet in diameter gives some idea of the scale on which the whole must have been constructed. Tiahuanaco lies in a valley which runs east and west, hedged in by the hills in low parallel lines. From the south side of the railway a clear impression can be obtained. In the foreground are the broken remains of mighty walls and impressive portals. A quarter of a mile

away is the mud and adobe village of to-day, huddled into the centre of the depression. Its greatest boast is the immense church and a few houses crowned with corrugated iron—a simpler way than the masonry of the past. The arches of the plaza, the portals, and much of the walls are of the old resistant stone. On entering the church the sacred edifice resembles an empty warehouse, cold and repellent, distant by a gulf which ecclesiasticism alone can fix. The floor is of stone, mud, and brick, uneven and menacing to the ankles. There are no chairs or stools, and the furniture consists exclusively of images, altars, and confessional boxes. From the bell-tower there was a good view over the country around. The Indians were scraping assiduously at the soil. The wind was keen from the west, and the fleeting clouds chased each other untiringly across the skies. It was a stern scene, bare and unromantic, leaving no margin for the gentler amenities of life and the riot of cushioned and untrained emotions. Hard and cold, the locality seemed a fitting stage for the more toilsome and permanent achievements which must have found their inspiration in the unending inward ardour of the struggle to attain, to worship, to aspire.

A comparatively slight watershed separates the drainage system of the Amazon from that of the Lake Titicaca. Seated on the back of a motor-lorry with a carload of Indians, I made my way over the wretched road which passes close by the lake and goes down to Sorata in the source-region of the great tributaries which contribute to build up the far-flung lowland system. We passed through the village of Achacachi and headed north across the Altiplano. Presently we began to climb till we were far above the lake, which we could see in the distance. The

eastern cordillera of the Andes was visible at times but was mostly lost in the clouds. It is, as I afterwards had occasion to see, a magnificent chain of peaks from 19,000 to 22,000 feet high, visible at the same moment for over 75 miles of its length. We ourselves were winding up towards the edge of the Altiplano. Between this and the cordillera there was a series of valleys and ravines whose waters flow downwards to the Madeira affluent of the Amazon. The Indians cultivated the land in all sorts of corners to the very summit of the ridge, some 14,000 feet high. At this altitude the wind was keen and the damp clouds were closing around. We skirted two forlorn and lonely tarns. Although nearly as high as Mont Blanc, there was no sign of snow, the snow-line in these latitudes standing at 15,500 feet. I had been looking over the mountain pools when suddenly I turned round and gazed into the west. In the centre of a great cloud a cleft had opened and through this window a glimpse could be caught of the snow-covered, almost perpendicular sides of Illampu, over 22,000 feet high. The mountain appeared so near, so startlingly distinct in every detail, and so likely to crumble down upon us in a mighty débâcle, that the sight almost deprived one of such breath as could be got. The clearness of the atmosphere, where it is possible to gaze from 14,000 to 22,000 feet over a series of ravines far below, is something to be remembered by vivid experience.

Presently we began to descend into the valleys. On topping the ridge, the first view of the source-region of the Upper Beni conveyed something of the austere magnificence of those profound and mysterious gorges in which the infant waters of the Amazon first bubble into birth. Right across the valley and close in front of us hung, suspended by



MOUNT ILLAMPU



THE VALLEYS OF THE ANDES



A STORM ON LAKE TITICACA



LLAMAS

invisible hands, a sombre veil of dark and angry nimbus. Underneath it the rays of the western and declining sun were shining, lighting the mist and setting it aglow with a silver sheen which mocked the chilly shade of our distant altitude. Slowly the cloud was rising, like a curtain on a stage which nature alone can set; where men and their paltry activities are dwarfed into temporary insignificance; where pristine and primeval mountains answer each other across narrow ravines and vainly threaten to crush the insignificant and profane streams which hurry down to the great rivers below. Rising beyond each other in successive ranges, the heights hedged in the valley and faded into the immeasurable distance.

The route wound slowly down. The sides of the hills, even when they appeared too precipitous for the safe maintenance of an erect position, were divided into innumerable small holdings, giving them the appearance of vast patchwork quilts hung out to dry. The road ran on the very edge of the precipice and was occasionally trying to the nerves. I believe, however, that only a few lorries have gone over since it was opened some years ago. On descending the first two or three thousand feet, the principal vegetation was a coarse green shrub. We worked downwards over a number of different rock and soil formations which would have interested a geologist. Presently we passed over a spur into an adjoining valley, where still far below, at about 9,000 feet, we could see the little town of Sorata, with its modern corrugated-iron roofs, and above it the solemn and ethereal peaks of Illampu, lit up by the western glow. Farther down great masses of red rock stood out on the mountain-side, afire with the light of the sun, contrasting with the deep green of the trees, which in some places were already the beginning of

the lowland vegetation. After crossing a turbulent rivulet and climbing a rise on the other side, we reached Sorata at 6 p.m.

The morning air was clear, sweet, and refreshing, like a stream in the desert. The steadily growing early light shining upon the snow-covered peaks of the 20,000-foot cordillera gave an effect that words are inadequate to describe. The silent cold of a Lapland night and the Sabbath calm of a Norway fiord together were there, combined under the brilliance of the southern sun. The snows sparkled and scintillated like a field sown with costly stones of incalculable worth. White and hasty clouds rose in surges from behind the peaks, broke and rolled into the valleys in waves of mist. Sorata has its streets cobbled, and its ups and downs bring to mind the lanes of Clovelly. The population is nine-tenths Aymara Indians, who sell their goods at the entrance of cavernous holes, where the entire family dwells, or squat at the edge of the pavement. Walk down to the end of any street and there in the valley far below can be heard the hum of many waters, always a charming and fascinating sound. Other scenes suggested the Dalmatians or the Tyrol. Here we were not in palm altitudes yet, but a few banana trees and a sub-tropical species of fir grew in the plaza. Down in the valley were the groves of eucalyptus and the huts of the Indians. The water of the streams was crystal-clear, tumbling round the rocks and dropping over miniature falls. Innumerable little flowers and shy retiring mosses carpeted the soil. Superb white lilies, similar to the arum lily, were growing by the waterside. Prominent was a tall, yellow bloom found on bushes as high as a man. Once and again the clouds lifted off Illampu, revealing a vision of majesty at rest.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SILVER PAST

THE glamour of history hangs around Potosí perhaps more than around any other city in South America. It was the magnet of the New World, the name which sent a thrill through Spain and warmed the blood of the coldest adventurer. Above the city rises the famous volcanic peak of perfect conical form from which it is calculated that between 1553 and 1910 66,000,000 lb. of silver have been extracted. The total production of silver in Bolivia during this period is estimated at 108,000,000 lb., and at one time it is believed that the single Cerro of Potosí produced one-third of the New World's supply of this precious metal. Within eighteen months of the foundation of the town, 2,500 houses had been erected for the 14,000 people who had already gathered on the spot. A census taken in 1650 gave a return of 160,000 for the population, and there was a period when it is supposed that 300,000 persons frequented the place. Gradually it dawned upon the fevered populace that the supply of silver from the magic mountain was failing. In 1825 there were but 8,000 inhabitants in the town. The populace to-day ranges round 30,000. The only industry is still mining, but principally for tin, though the tailings left by past generations of miners are still profitably worked on the Cerro. In the time of her greatest expansion Potosí possessed at least eighty churches. Twenty can be counted from a low

elevation above the town and there are many more. The Casa Nacional de Moneda, a massive building, was erected in 1773 and became the National Mint of the country. On the heights above the city thirty-two reservoirs were constructed in 1651 at a cost of 3,000,000 pesos, with canals and aqueducts after the style of the Romans. Thus a constant supply of water was available for the washing of the minerals. Twenty-two of these reservoirs remain in good condition to-day.

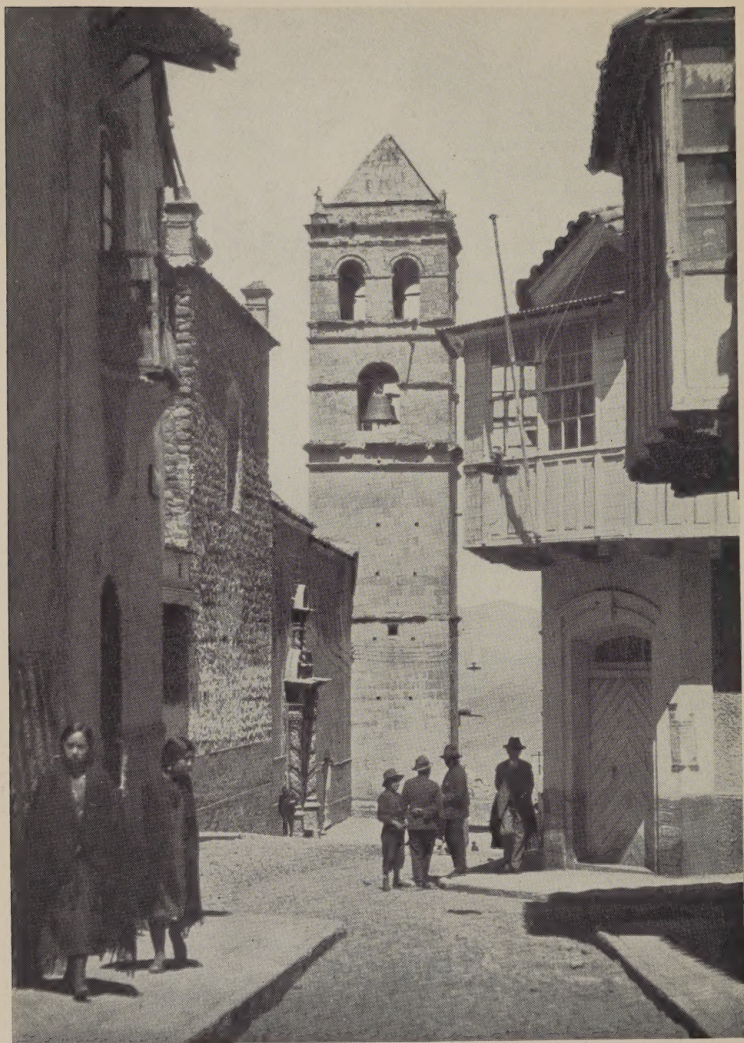
It is said that the modern aspect of the city is a mere shadow of its appearance at a not very distant epoch of the past. At the same time there is much that is pregnant with interest. The old churches are carved and ornamented in the heavy Spanish style of the colonial days. Many of the portals of the private houses are decorated with coats of arms and sculptured doorposts of massive dimensions. The streets are very narrow, paved with cobble-stones, and at every corner is a convent or church. The chief ornament of the houses is the small projecting balcony which overhangs the street in the favourite manner of the Peninsula. The plaza is a big open space ringed round with arches. The whole city stands on a steep slope and some of the streets are precipitous. Towards the western end it drops on one side into a valley, and far below can be seen the arches of the aqueducts, while the hum of the little artificial falls is in the ears. There are no trees in the town, nor any sign of vegetation, except some stunted arboreal failures in the plaza, maintained in life by an Indian with a watering-can. The altitude, 13,400 feet, must make it difficult for vegetation to thrive. The place is innocent, therefore, of natural adornment. But the solid wooden doors of the houses, decorated with brass studs 2 inches in length, often hide unsuspected



THE SILVER CERRO



TRANSPORTING BEVERAGES IN BOLIVIA



POTOSI, THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS

secrets. Like the wall of a Persian court, they only stand between the wearied traveller and something refreshingly green. Peep in, and in the patios or central courts will often be seen some homely and unexpected verdure. It is the walls of your neighbour's house that just divide the desert from the sown.

What remains of the former magnificence of Potosí, entitled by Charles V of Spain the Villa Imperial, or Imperial City, of the New World? The reservoirs, the Casa de Moneda, and some of the churches; the memory of the millions in silver piled up on the green cloth in the palace of Don Diego Centeno, the discoverer of the famous Cerro; the long-abandoned workings on the slopes of the conical mountain, and the ineffaceable impressions of bitterness and humiliation stamped upon the minds of the servile and unfortunate Indians. Mute they may be with agony or voicing ineffectual complaints, but the heart-cry is never absent from the soul of this persecuted race, crushed to raise into power the conqueror from a foreign land, crucified to build a new society of immorality and greed. A Bolivian writer, already quoted, who has taken up his pen in defence of the Indian, describes a *fiesta* among the Indians of Potosí thus: 'The Indians withdrew from the priest's house drunk, shouting and singing in the plaza and streets "*cer, cer*", by which they mean that they are referring to the Cerro de Potosí. This Cerro they hold as their Achachila [tutelary spirit], though terrible to them and generous to the whites. The memories of the colonial period have not been effaced from the mind of these Indians. . . . In the greatest diversions of the *cholo* and *mestiço*, the sighs of grief wrung from them by the recollection of the story of their miserable life or of their mis-

fortunes are never absent. In their nature resides this tender, sorrowful something, intensely outraged by people and circumstances, which suddenly breaks from forgetfulness, forces its way to the surface, and clouding their hour of rejoicing, manifests itself in sobs. The "momo" of the Indian is weeping. The signs of grief, the legacy of the deep bitterness of centuries of suffering, do not completely disappear from his smiling face, however great may be his joy.¹

To enter the cloisters or to loiter round the old churches of San Lorenzo, Santo Domingo, San Francisco, and others, is to go back in history four hundred years. In every one of these are gorgeous images and altars decked with silver from the fabulous Cerro. In every one, all day, are a few worshippers with hearts and faces uplifted to one or other of the countless different Virgins and innumerable saints; while others dedicate their attention to dead and unresponsive Christs, nailed to a cross, with blood pouring from hands and feet and side, emaciated and agony-stricken, but withal clothed loosely from the waist in a magnificent silver robe in the pontifical style. The faithful were almost exclusively Quichua Indians in their national costumes. These differ in certain respects from those seen in La Paz. Many of the men wear long hair and hats shaped like the familiar tin helmet of the war, of black home-made felt and ornamented with silver braid. A few men, who had come in from a community near-by, had shorts, bare legs, and a tunic like Robin Hood, of dark cloth with a light woven belt round their waist, and a coloured pouch to carry coca. The old men were the most picturesque and a large proportion live to a good old age, but the miners generally die young. Others wore a little

¹ M. Rigoberto Paredes, *op. cit.*

coat suggesting a boy's Eton jacket, ornamented with braid and patterns in black and blue, and a pair of exceedingly baggy trousers. Others, again, used the ordinary coloured ponchos and blankets of the Andean Indians. The women gloried in their coloured skirts, but some were dressed in a peculiar dark costume and short skirt reaching to just below the knees.

Among the many curious historical remains in Potosí, I found this inscription at the entrance of the cloisters of St. Francis. A rough translation may possibly be of interest to students of the life of that remarkable Christian:

I am St. Francis, the great Master,
I am great for I was small;
I rose to might through being nothing,
Because, in my own consciousness,
I occupied the lowest post.
I took the place of the Supreme one,
Of that Seraphim rebellious
Who sought the Deity to oppose,
And set himself against the Word.
I am likeness of His likeness,
Reflection of His own reflection,
I am His exact translation,
Written with the full agreement
Of the Divine Crucifixion.
His form I copy in my body,
His hands am I, I am His feet,
My breast is wholly one with His breast,
Am I what I could not be?
Am I God? I do not think it;
I am man and seem like God,
And I am what I do not seem,
I am the unlikely human,
I am the cause of the effect,
I am the sun, I am his rays,
I am Christ, not being Christ,
I am Creator or I am creature,
I appear as All things at one instant.

I am the soul of a great marvel,
A miracle and strange portent,
I am a sign and a great wonder.
I am the richest of the poor,
Because, as nothing of my own I hold,
And of all I stand in need,
All that I own I am myself.
When on myself I fix my gaze,
I am in myself sufficient;
And when I contemplate myself
I find that it is thus with me.

The country around Potosí has its own peculiar characteristics. The elevations are always high, and the branch line from the Antofagasta railway climbs to 15,700 feet. The plateau is broken into innumerable gorges and peaks, leaving a skyline of tumultuous and disordered impressions. A hideous nakedness prevails, but occasionally some sickly green may be espied with a few tumble-down huts in the vicinity. Isolated rocks lie upon the slopes of the valleys. The sides of the mountains are carved into grotesque and fantastic shapes, pinnacles and gargoyles, serried rows of nature's memorial pillars, and galleries of unnamed monuments, the sculptures of the wind and rain, raised to commemorate the convulsions of the past. There are no signs of any attempt to cultivate these slopes. But they are decked out in the most vivid mineral pigments, purples, mauves, reds, and pinks, combined with the yellow of sulphur deposits. The soil is loose, the rocks appearing as if they had been twisted and thrown over one another in an irresistible chaos. The scene is as barren as the desert of Sinai, but painted from nature's most gorgeous and varied palette. The ragged and forbidding hills provide a vivid combination of contrast of colour and contorsion of contour.

Farther east of Potosí is the town of Sucre, with



THE ATTRACTIONS OF A TOOL SHOP



A QUIET CORNER IN POTOSI . . .

its 20,000 people, the legal capital of the country. The railway is now in course of construction. The place stands on the summit of a slight water-shed between the system of the Amazon and that of the Paraguay. From here I made the journey back to Cochabamba by car, and the conditions represented the facilities available for motoring in Bolivia to-day. I had contracted with a Turk, of the name of Seléme, for transport in a large Buick with several other passengers. On October 25th he appeared suddenly in the evening with the announcement that an immediate start was necessary if we were to negotiate the *quebradas*, or river-beds, successfully. Rain, he said, was falling heavily in the hills and the least delay was inadmissible.

We climbed the hill above the city, catching glimpses of the lights in the valley below. When we reached the top of the rise, the road led for some time along a ridge. The hills were rounded, falling into folds and hollows like the summit of the Wiltshire downs. A healthy layer of soil covered the rocks, and this was utilized by the people for the purposes of a primitive agriculture. The moon was full but, of course, hidden behind clouds. The down-pour had passed over, but the rain was still driving through the mountain air. Volumes of mist rolled over the hills and hid the ravines and the immediate distance from our sight. Clouds seemed enveloped and suspended in the mist itself and hung threateningly round the heads of the valleys. The night, fortunately, was soft and cool, and the novelty of this moonlit panorama of mountain and mist held my attention from moment to moment. A few solitary Indians were trudging along the narrow road, and an occasional hut witnessed to the presence of a scanty population.

After half an hour of this travelling we began to descend the precipitous sides of the cordillera by one of those narrow, zigzag, and incredibly perpendicular roads that form the only solution to the problem of transport in this country. Down in the valley far below we could distinguish the bed of a river along which our route was to lie. We were making all haste, as we hoped to forestall the descent of the floods from the hills. About half-way down we stopped and listened and looked. There seemed to be an unusual gleam in the bottom of the gorge. We went a little farther and stopped again. In a few moments' silence it was not difficult to detect, hundreds of feet below, a solemn and sinister sound. It was the roar of the waters rushing down from the hills in a mad, unbridled torrent. We were too late. The valley of the Chaquimayo was already flooded. Down the *quebrada* were rolling masses of stones and mud, together with the silt and sand and water, which the great Amazon deposits in the Atlantic ocean at the rate of 60,000 tons per second.

We arrived at the bottom at 9 p.m. It was obviously impossible to pass. The muddy, turbid waters were racing past, swollen with the hours of rain upon the mountain slopes. We waited an hour, during which time the weather cleared. We started again, only to be stopped a few minutes later by a wilder torrent than the first coming in from a narrow side valley. We stopped and slept the night in the car—six of us. The situation was, if not encouraging, at least picturesque. The surroundings were sombre but sublime. A hesitating moon was breaking through the clouds, wearied with the struggle with the pitiless elements of the storm, pallid and fore-spent. To the west lay the valley of the River Chaquimayo hidden among the hills, and in the south

the gorge down which we had made our way. Ahead the mountains rose like a mighty perpendicular cliff, utterly closing in the valley and towering hundreds of feet above. Such, then, were the rugged fortresses from which the tireless Amazon unceasingly draws the elements of her strength and volume.

By 5.30 a.m. the flood had passed down the valley. The rough road which is cleared in these river-beds at the beginning of every dry season had, however, been wiped out as cleanly and completely as if it had never been made. Immense boulders and innumerable stones of all sizes and shapes were scattered about, while junior cliffs some 3 feet in height interrupted our progress. It seemed as though an earthquake could hardly have done the damage more effectually. We left and made our way cautiously down, clearing away stones, smoothing down the miniature precipices, and crossing and recrossing the river itself. For some hours we made about two miles per hour. The sunrise was mellow and beautiful in the solitude of the valley, some hills tinged with colour, others resting still in the coolness of the shadow. At 8.35 we reached the confluence of the River Chico, and Indian huts began to appear more frequently.

It was in the late afternoon that the fatality occurred. Shortly after 4 p.m. we were within 2 miles of the end of the *quebrada*. The road had become visible and the force of the flood had evidently not been so devastating. We entered the water to cross the river almost for the last time. We were two-thirds of the distance across when the driving-wheels lost their grip of the mud and there we stayed. That was the fatality.

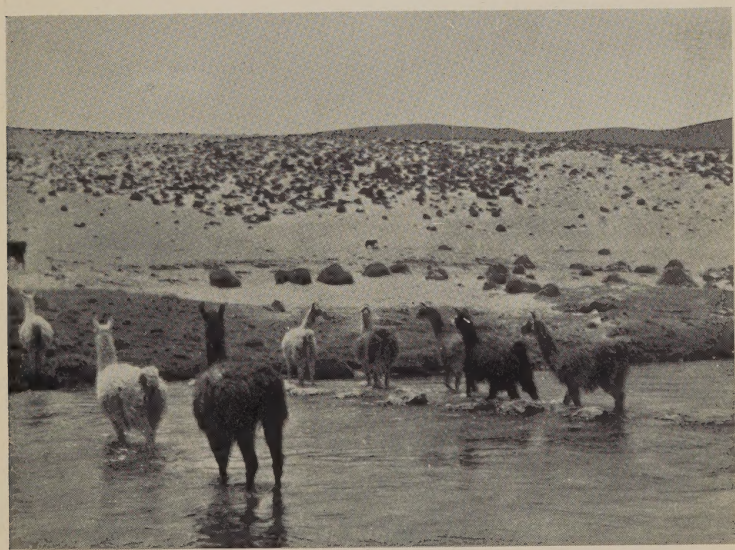
We were just opposite two huts and set to work

with the aid of four or five available Indians. We toiled till 8 p.m. to no effect. Meanwhile it came on to rain heavily, and it was evident that nothing could be done that night. The baggage on the carrier, which had sunk almost immediately on our getting stuck, was ruined. The remainder we took up to the Indian hut and there passed the night. The roof of the wretched hovel leaked like a perforated copy of a daily newspaper, so it was useless changing anything. I had an attack of malaria. But, though rugless, I ensconced myself on the top of a 'Revelation' suit-case, with a typewriter for a pillow, conscious that I was sleeping creases into my only available spare suits. It was pleasant, as always, to review mentally the number of disadvantages in the situation which might have been present but fortunately were not so. Outside, however, I could hear the roar of the waters, sweeping all before them in a triumphant invasion of the valley, an awesome, solemn, and never-to-be-forgotten music. I knew that it was a hard outlook for my friend the Turk and his car.

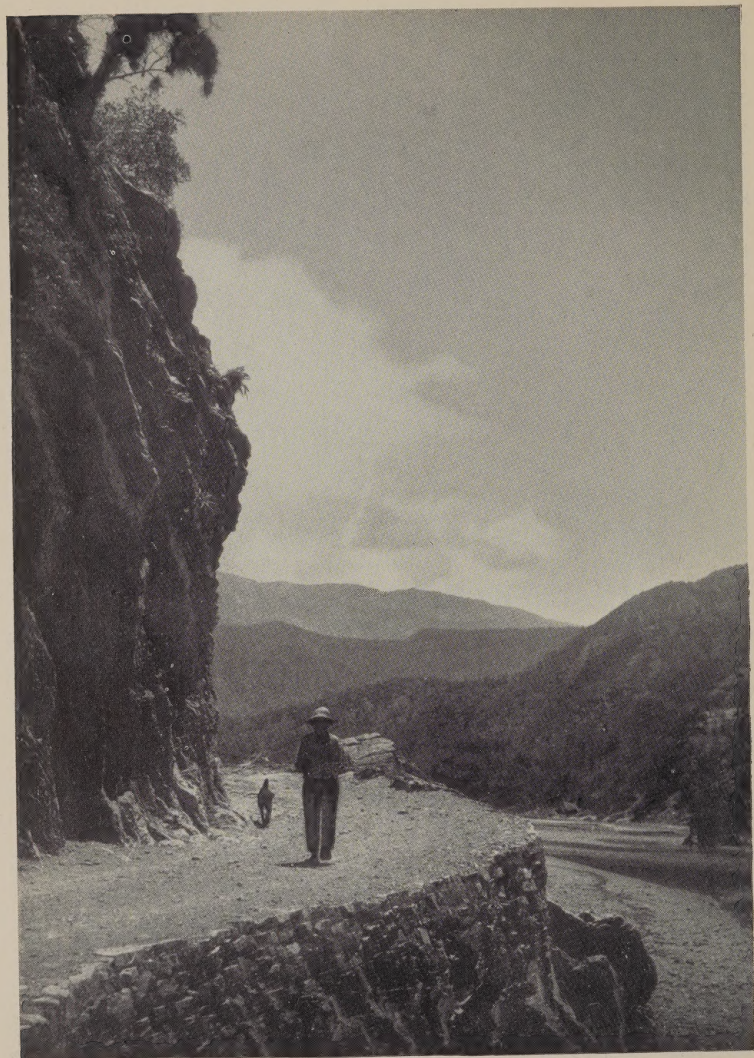
In the small hours the rain passed and the same moon shone again with unaffected serenity. The morning broke, but I could not summon up the energy to join in the work. I went down to the car and saw that it was useless to think of travelling farther in it. The back axle had been fatally injured, presumably by a rock, the magneto was full of sand, the carburettor damaged almost beyond recognition. There were 6 inches of mud on the cushions of the seats, left by the receding torrent. A 10-gallon case of petrol had disappeared down the stream. After consulting with the Turk, we sent a man down to the telegraph station a few miles away to wire to Cochabamba for another conveyance. With thirty-five



THE BRIDGE OVER THE RIO GRANDE



A CONVENIENT FORD



THE RIO GRANDE

men and seven mules we hauled the car out of the river. As a preliminary measure we had to build a dam of stones, branches, and mud to divert the water. In the afternoon we moved down to the confluence of the Rio Grande. At this point the road leaves the valley and is cut out of the cliff. A few miles farther along was the telegraph station of Puente Arce, and here an old and decrepit-looking suspension bridge crosses the river. We took up our quarters in the telegraphist's hut and awaited the coming of another car. As the telegraph lines were down in all directions our delay was an enforced one of several days. This Rio Grande is one of the true sources of the upper Madeira and the same river as that which I had ascended between Nueva Esperança and Puerto Velarde. Here, even at this time of year, it is a deep and impetuous stream about 40 yards broad, not occupying in the dry season all its bed but flowing swiftly down the valley from one cliff to the other. At this altitude it is possible to get a faint conception of the majesty, depth, and grandeur of the gorges of the affluents of the Upper Amazon. The mountains rose in almost perpendicular heights, imprisoning the yellow and foaming torrent in an iron grasp. After the rains there is enough verdure to deck with pleasantness the more agreeable spots. But at this time there was a scanty vegetation of stunted trees, cactus, and clinging plants struggling to maintain a precarious footing on the mountain-side, while of domestic animals the hardy goat alone could claim a familiar and friendly environment. In the valley itself and on the lower and more kindly slopes a few Indian huts, a shelving beach of mud and stones, a flock of leisurely sheep or a small troop of the ever-resistant cargo donkeys on the road, added variety to the scene. In the evening the de-

clining light shed a pale glow on the water, while the brooding clouds hung over the clefts and folds of the surrounding mountains. Such are the alluring scenes which the Andes of Bolivia conceal between their cordilleras.

CHAPTER IX

A CAPITAL AND A LAST REFUGE

CUZCO holds the visitor with an irresistible attraction. It is situated at the source of the Chunchumayo River. This turbid, rusty-coloured rivulet races down to meet the Urubamba, one of the source-streams of the Amazon itself. At the head of a rich and sheltered valley stands the former city of the Incas. The country is green and pleasant, although nearly 11,000 feet above the sea, and when watered with the first rains of the wet season is a fair and welcome sight to the traveller who comes from the bleak shores of Lake Titicaca. Due, apparently, to its protected position, this favoured valley appears far more fertile than do similar altitudes in Bolivia. In the early morning before the clouds float upwards the snow-tipped peaks condescend to reveal their beauty, hiding themselves too often till evening, when the slanting rays of the sun may light them up for a fleeting minute.

Cuzco has been so often described that to attempt that task would be to encroach upon the superfluous. The main interests lie in two realms: the Inca and pre-Inca ruins, and the architecture of the colonial period. In both of these realms many descriptions exist, but few which give an adequate idea of the marvels of those early achievements. Different styles of Indian work belonging to widely dissimilar periods have been identified by the student. The mural constructions of the Incas might be termed pyramidal

in principle, the walls leaning in at a slight angle. No trace of mortar holds the stones together. But they are so perfectly cut and fitted into one another that, as has often been said, it is impossible to insert the blade of a knife between them. In the Temple of the Sun this is exhibited to perfection. Stones of vast size and weight were employed, the posts and lintel of a door sometimes being hewn out of a single block. In many of the walls are to be seen niches whose use is obscure, slightly tapering to conform to the general angle of the masonry. As hand implements were only made from copper and bronze, the skill and patience displayed are nothing short of exceptional. Equally remarkable is the way every slope is levelled out in a series of terraces to facilitate edifices and plantations. It has been asserted that Babylon, with her hanging gardens, could produce nothing on such a scale as was accomplished in the remote and lovely valley of the Incas.

Above the city is the famous fortress of Sacsahuaman, belonging to an early period. It covers a considerable area, but consists in the main of three walls, one above the other. It stands several hundred feet higher than Cuzco in a perfect natural position, almost seeming to topple over the city. As you pause by the cross at the summit of the hill the whole scene is spread out beneath. The valley stretches away, rich with prosperity, calm, and peace. Below, far below, lies the city of the Incas, the city of the Sun, the triumphs and tragedies of whose history are written all around in stone. On either side rise the heights in rolling leagues of green, awake to breathe in the purest and freshest of the winds, the guardians of the smiling pastures of the valleys below, the silent witnesses of the passing vicissitudes of fortune. Sunshine and shadow contend for the



THE MARKET AT CUZCO



THE FORTRESS OF SACSABUAMAN



THE UNIVERSITY AT CUZCO

lower slopes. The clouds kiss the hills a perpetual farewell to a long-lost past. Perhaps, on the opposite range, a few drops of rain, the tears of heaven, are falling, or a strange light is resting on some distant summits. For the pagan glory of the age that has fled has long since given way to the Christian boast of the Holy Office of the Inquisition and to the supremacy of a system embodied in the numerous churches dotted about the city, among which rises, in the centre of the panorama, the imposing edifice of the Company of Jesus.

Colonial Cuzco is equally remarkable. For wealth and variety of churches and monasteries it is the richest of all the colonial cities I have seen. The town itself is dirty and the streets are narrow, paved with rough and uneven cobble-stones. But in every corner is some beautiful old house with decorated portals, and in every little plaza some religious edifice or convent. The Cathedral is an enormous and impressive building, almost dark inside and filled with a multitude of pictures and altars. Some of these are said to be of considerable merit, and there is a Christ which is attributed to Van Dyck. The high altar is a lofty structure made from solid silver. The pulpit and the choir-stalls are decorated with the most elaborate carving. On the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress of Peru in 1925, the building was raised to the dignity of a *basilica*. There is nothing like it for size and decoration among the churches of Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro. On the other side of the plaza is the Jesuit church, a stately edifice none the less attractive on entering. Farther up the narrow street is the church of La Merced, and between them the University. In addition to the treasure pillaged from the Incas, the colonists seem to have vied with one another in raising these

temples and adorning them with altars, images, and pictures of biblical scenes, traditions, saints, and bishops. Many of the churches are themselves built from the stones of Incaic palaces, so ruthless was the policy of destruction carried through by the Spaniards. Cuzco itself was levelled by an earthquake in 1650, only the Cathedral and the Church of Santa Clara surviving. Since that disaster the other edifices have been wholly rebuilt. The remains of the structures of the Incas were entirely unaffected. But, in spite of all its imposing buildings, Cuzco of to-day, with its population of 30,000, can, perhaps, hardly be held to rival the Cuzco of the Incas, where 200,000 people are said to have found their homes, then one of the greatest cities in the world south of the Equator.

Standing amidst these monuments of history the pathetic story of the past comes back with irresistible force. It is told by the old chroniclers and is reproduced by Markham¹ and others. The tale of tragedy culminated in the execution of Tupac Amaru. 'O righteous God! Behold how my enemies shed my blood!' Thus spake the last representative of the Incas to be acclaimed as a sovereign, raising his hand before the immense crowd of Indians assembled in the great plaza. Immediately after, he was thrown on the floor of the stage and beheaded. His head was placed on a pole and elevated before the people. The body was buried in the high chapel of the Cathedral, the good Bishop of Popayán saying Masses for his soul.

That night Mancio Sierra de Leguízamo, whose house was on a corner of the plaza, lay awake on his bed, for the events of the day troubled him. Before the saffron light of the mountain dawn had

¹ See C. R. Markham, *The Incas of Peru*. London. 1910.

yet touched the fair valley of Vilcabamba, he seemed to hear a sound as of the movement of an invisible host. He stepped to his window and peeped out. In the pale moonlight he saw a strange scene. The great square of the city was packed with a crowded multitude on their knees. With fervent and whispered prayers they were offering their worship to the head of their beloved monarch. Thus lit by the lesser and melancholy light of the moon was the passing of the last of the Sons of the Sun.

So perished the famous Inca dynasty. Their empire, as a whole, did not reach the development of the kingdoms of the Old World, nor, of course, did they enjoy the same natural resources, particularly the horse and oxen. But, as a line of monarchs, impartial students admit that the world has rarely seen their equals in any age. Poverty was not known within their borders. The thief did not exist, nor the adulterous woman. Not a profitable acre of land could be found which was not turned to productive use. Their vast empire from Chile to Colombia they governed with such prudence and sagacity that students of political economy of to-day have turned to their example for inspiration and instruction. For this reason, as Markham rightly maintains, the history of their rise, florescence, and of their cruel end is pre-eminently worthy of our attention. Few or none among the Spaniards could see the value of that which they had destroyed. The empire rapidly became depopulated, as the deserted terraces and fields show. The surviving relations of the Incas died in poverty or exile, though princes of a royal and distinguished stock.

The railway down the valley of the Urubamba is now under construction. The train climbs out of the Cuzco basin by a series of switchbacks, giving another

magnificent view over the country. Topping the divide, the line then descends into the valley of another small affluent of the Urubamba. This valley resembled a miniature and level plain. Cattle and sheep were grazing in hundreds, and the heavy rain had left patches of shining marsh and clothed the hill-side with draperies of verdure. Finally, we reached the Urubamba itself, here a stream about 20 yards wide, in places placid, but frequently tumbling over the stubborn rocks, a broken, tormented mass of turbid and muddy water. The railway follows the river to Ollantaytambo, where stands the celebrated and extraordinary fortress of the Incas, and continues down the valley. In 1928 it was open as far as a small village known as Cedrobamba. From here it was a short walk of about 6 miles down to La Maquina. The walk was along the track, and in surroundings of such unusual charm that it was easy to forget the rain which was steadily falling. The line followed the banks as closely as possible. The overhanging cliffs, which here closed in on the river, had been tunnelled through when necessary. The roar of the waters was always in my ears. The swollen streams were tumbling down from the mountain-side. When the rain passed and the clouds relented for a brief instant, the sunlight fell upon peeps of snowbound tops. The Indians passed, mostly going in the opposite direction, with their troops of shaggy donkeys loaded with bales of the precious coca leaf.

La Maquina is a railway camp and nothing more. All the engineers were away when I made my visit, an advantage rather than otherwise, as it left me free to absorb the rare atmosphere of the place. The Indians employed on the line were camped around in the crudest huts imaginable. But the



TALKING IT OVER IN CUZCO



THE SOURCES OF THE URUBAMBA



MACCHU PICCHU, ON THE EDGE OF THE CHASM

natural setting of the artificial little place made it one of the most striking I have ever passed a night in. The upper affluents of the Madeira in Bolivia are sufficiently impressive, but here the sources of the Amazon surpass them as a planet differs from a satellite in glory. Truly the greatest of rivers draws its resources from scenes of incomparable grandeur. Every fresh vista dwarfed to insignificance the *quebrada* of the Rio Grande. At La Maquina the river ran through a narrow cañon, swirling round the foot of a mountain, tumbling down at a break-neck angle, swollen by the first of the coming rains. The collection of huts stood on the outside of the bend. Opposite was a mountain like the Sugar Loaf in the bay of Rio de Janeiro, revealing a sheer inaccessible face of rock, crowned at the summit with a wreath of vegetation. Upstream the same mountains rise, covered with trees and creepers, till they finally climb into the level of perpetual snow. In the evening and at dawn a golden and unfamiliar light shines through this cleft or that and lights the opposite peaks with a radiance from another world. When the shadows fall the rocky walls stand out, firm and menacing, like a vast and concrete block of darkness, blacker than the night itself. The music of the waters echoes in the background of every dream.

The following day I rose at dawn and started out down the valley, crossing the river by a swing-bridge of liana-made ropes. I was already in tropical surroundings, so rapid is the degree of descent and so heavy the rainfall on the eastern slopes of the cordillera. The path was damp and deep in mud. The trees were small, but laden with epiphytes and indefatigable creepers. The undergrowth was thick and characteristically merciless. After descending a league or so, a track appeared leading up the side of

the cañon to the destination of my search. It was a stiff climb through the forest till this track emerged on the upper slopes, where the bracken was growing in profusion. Finally, I reached my destination, the Inca citadel of Macchu Picchu.

Macchu Picchu is the most surprising remnant of antiquity I have seen in the New World. It is a little town, ruined and deserted except for one Indian and his donkey, on the flat top of a steep rise. When the ascent has been made the summits of the mountains are still towering above. I looked down into the gorge and upon a score of smaller elevations, but soaring higher yet rose the mightier bulwarks, the stalwarts of the cordillera. Such magnificence is difficult to rival. As I climbed the final few yards, toiling up the steep steps that give access to the site, and sought a point of vantage, it was impossible to restrain an involuntary exclamation. In front stretched a line of peaks clothed with the spotless mantle of Nature's perpetual and changeless ermine. I sat down on the mighty stones, and behind me again the summits were white with undisturbed and virgin snow. Below and around and on all the intervening slopes was the dank and struggling vegetation of the zones of semi-tropical damp and heat. The whole climatic scale of nature was spread out as a panorama before the vision. The snow-caps sparkled and glowed with the imperial iridescence of the morning light. Little did they seem to know of the valleys beneath, where confusion contrasted with their unchallenged calm and rivalries clashed in vain, ignorant of their ineffable peace.

Macchu Picchu is eminently fitted to be alike the birthplace and the last refuge of a persecuted race. The mountain fortresses are totally invisible from below. Caravans and armies could pass down the

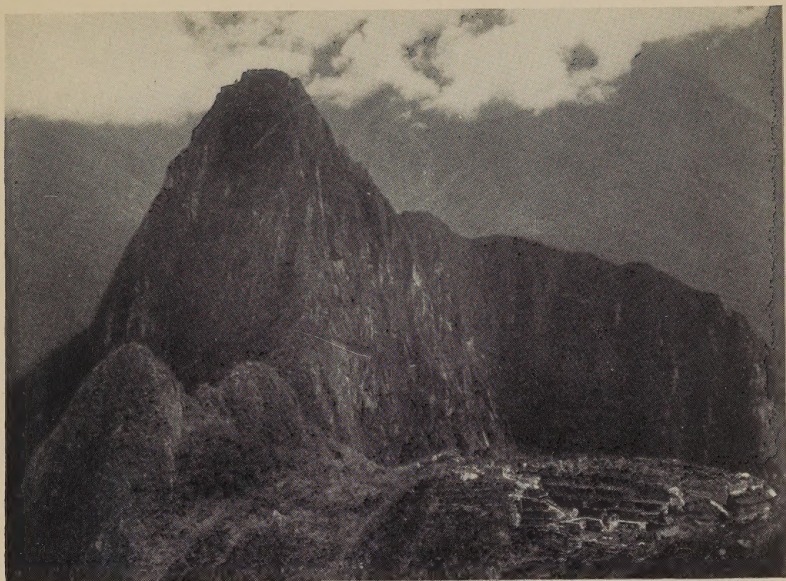
valley unsuspecting of the citadel frowning down upon them. So well did the Incas hide the secret of their refuge that the Spaniards never found it in spite of search, and there are few direct mentions of its existence until comparatively recent times. Morning after morning the dwellers there must have risen to behold majesty depicted before their eyes. The hum of the stream, a thousand feet beneath, as it circled round the hills, like the fluvial moat of an impregnable castle of nature, was in my ears. The mist from the night's heavy rain rose in steaming clouds from the gorge, suggesting the threatening smoke from a dreaded crater and blotting out the mountains. In the north the rain was threshing through the middle air. White streaks of foaming water rushed down the wooded slopes and poured over the precipices of rock. Through such inaccessible chasms and amid such scenes of insurpassable variety do the waters of the Upper Amazon burst their way through to the plains below. Instinctively I recalled a passage in Ruskin, where a warning is uttered against supposing that we can always afford to dwell in the presence of exceptional beauty. There are some natures which can only be affected by lampblack or lightning. In Cuzco one of the principal *fiestas* is in honour of Nuestro Señor de los Temblores—Our Lord of the Earthquakes. But God is not in the storm, nor in the earthquake, but in the still, small voice. The subdued and quieter passages of unobtrusive loveliness are very far from being destitute of powerful æsthetic appeal.

The place itself is built of white granite, and the labour in masonry alone must have demanded a will of the same stubborn resistance. Here, too, it would be superfluous to describe the city in detail. At one end it is divided into two parts by a depression

running east and west. To the south of this depression are steps leading up, among houses, to a hill on the summit of which is a seat hewn out of one block of stone. It would be easy from here, or from almost any point, to throw yourself down into the gorge to an instantaneous death. Farther east is the temple, of beautifully hewn and fitted stones, some of immense size. The building has three tapering windows facing north, a feature which makes it distinctive among the ancient temples of the region. The altar is in the middle. To the north of the depression there is a low arch, and then a long and narrow passage, followed by an ascent of a series of stone steps which lead to a group of small houses of uniform pattern. To the east of this section there are three houses with windows opening into one another, and then the main approach from below by a series of stone steps. Down by the steps flows a tiny stream of water, dropping into successive sinks or wells, each hollowed out from a solid stone. Then comes a circular fort built upon a projecting and overhanging rock. Close by the fort, and below, is a cave known as the Inca's house. It is a remarkable place. Use had been made of a huge leaning rock, and inside the walls are completed with perfectly fitted and trimmed stones, together with seats and the typical tapering niches. Below the fort a path runs beneath a series of terraces to a group of slant-roofed houses. Above is another group of houses and a further path to a stone gateway, outside of which there are still extensive remains of dwelling-places and terraces.

According to Hiram Bingham,¹ to whom the modern investigation of the place is due, Macchu Picchu was built about A.D. 800. At this time the

¹ Hiram Bingham, *Inca-land*. London, 1922.



MACCHU PICCHU, A CITADEL OF THE ANDES



THE FORESTS OF THE UPPER AMAZON



AMAZON AND ANDES

Quichua tribes of the Cuzco valley enjoyed a civilization equal to that of Tiahuanaco. Some extraordinary disaster then occurred, probably an invasion of barbarian hordes such as scourged the Roman Empire. At this epoch, coincident with the fall of Tiahuanaco, rulers and priests, together with a mass of the people, saved themselves by fleeing down the valley, where they hid among the inaccessible heights of Macchu Picchu, building there the city. Here Manco Capac, the first of the Incas, is supposed to have been born, and to have led his people out to conquer the invaders of years before. By 1300 Cuzco had become so evidently the capital of the Inca Empire that Macchu Picchu was abandoned. On the advent of the Spaniards, however, the priests and sacred virgins were sent down to the almost forgotten city as a place of refuge, and here they disappear from the page of history.

CHAPTER X

ON THE PACIFIC COAST

THE journey from Arequipa, with its 8,000 feet altitude, to the Pacific sea-board affords a characteristic introduction to the Peruvian coast. For the most part the railway passes through unvarying and desert wastes. For some time the cactus was in evidence as the only ambassador of life in realms where inanition held undisputed and unrivalled sway. At intervals we crossed the valley of a stream whose banks provided a sinuous oasis in the wilderness. Presently this would wander away into the distance, the cactus disappeared, and there remained nothing but the variegated rocks. As we descended gradually on to the coastal plain, these gave way to stretches of Arabian sand, drifted by the wind into recurring dunes resembling the conventional bunker in shape. From the last slopes of the mountains there was an extensive view through the mist and heat to where a thin line of white broke the indefiniteness of the horizon. It was the Pacific Ocean. We continued the journey for some hours through scenes as lifeless and arid as would seem only to be found on the surface of a long devitalized planet moving unceasingly through the outer and frigid rings of space. Immediately before the coastal strip, we crossed a slight rise, where the cactus began to appear again, and then an exiguous vegetation adorned by a riot of wild flowers, chief among which was a brilliant yellow bloom similar to a marigold.

The coast of Peru is, it might almost be said, absolutely rainless. Every few years showers may fall, and occasionally a more considerable precipitation. Consequently, almost the whole of the coastal plain is an unrelieved desert. The south-east trades, which are the prevalent winds, blow across the continent and deposit all their rain on the cordilleras. As a result there is very little rural population in this zone. The little ports that exist are generally at the mouth of some valley leading down from the cordillera, and from these cotton and cattle are shipped for transport to the capital or for exportation. Fortunately the sea is never rough. There are no storms, no untoward infelicities of nature, and ships merely anchor in the open roadstead. All day and all night the tireless rollers ride in and spend their force on the desolate littoral, iron-bound and protected by masses of volcanic rock. These general characteristics are true of all the shore-line seen in a coasting voyage from Mollendo, the port of Arequipa and Southern Peru, to Callao, the port of Lima, the capital. At Quilca there was a green valley, and above it an insignificant village lost in oceans and billows of sand. At Chala there was no green visible at all. To the south a low promontory ran into the sea, backed by a headland of outcropping rock half buried in a rust-coloured and sandy soil, one jagged head rising behind the other. The coast curved round to the north to form a bay, and crouching round the beach was a small village of fifty houses arranged like a T. It boasted a church and a diminutive iron pier built on rocks and surmounted by a solitary crane. A mile farther to the north was another wee village among the lower hillocks and a small cove protected by the rocks. Farther on, the sand was somewhat lighter in colour, and the far end

of the bay was closed in by dark and sinister-looking cliffs. Two or three animals were wandering about in a listless way, and a condor soared ceaselessly over the southern hills. A line of telegraph posts receded wearily into the distance. The far-off mountains revealed traces of vegetation, but the foreground was destitute of trees or green.

Yet this barren coast has been of extraordinary economic value to Peru, for this is the field-elect of the guano industry. Guano, as a nitrogenous product, is a fertilizer thirty-three times more effective than farmyard manure. It was known to the Incas, and the industry then fell into abeyance till 1843, when it was recommenced on ruinous lines, thousands of birds being killed or frightened away. To-day it is under proper control. All along the west coast of Peru, almost to the latitude of Guayaquil in Ecuador, runs the cold current from the Antarctic known as the Humboldt current. Such is its chilling effect that the average temperature of the water is 20° F. below its theoretical value for these latitudes. This has its corresponding reaction upon the atmosphere, and the days are consistently cool and frequently sunless. At the same time there is little or no rain, only a damp and persistent mist. The low temperature of the Humboldt current allows the presence of thousands of small fish, chiefly anchovies, all along the coast. Frequently the water is discoloured by them. The result is that several species of sea-birds belonging to temperate climates are able to haunt these equatorial latitudes in enormous numbers and thrive without let or hindrance. They rest upon the islands and rocks of the coast, and here the rainless climate preserves the deposits of guano without impair. The islands are now worked in rotation, and

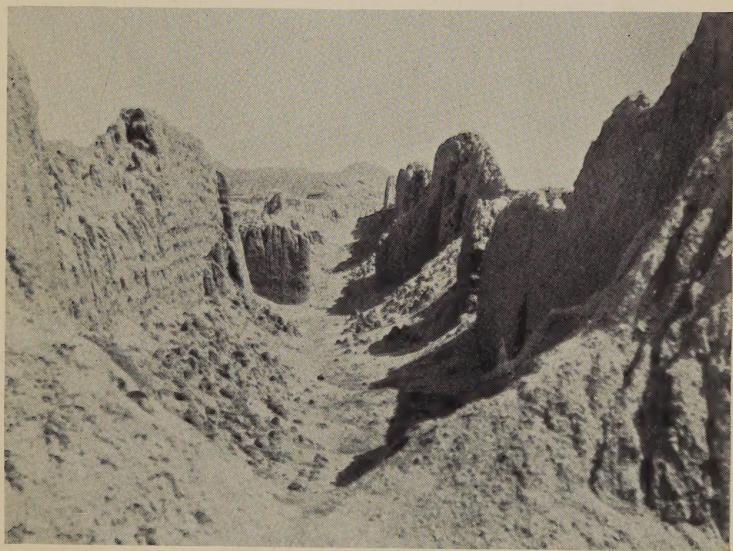
the guano is treated as a mineral, being hewn out with pickaxes and tools.

The full significance of these conditions only becomes evident on a journey along the coast. The ocean heaves and falls without intermission, like the silent breathing of a universe at rest. It wells up into the caves and breaks eternally against the rocks. It reminds you ever and again of the noble sea-passages of literature, of the sea-music of great composers, and the canvases of Old Masters. With such monotony of motion and the discourtesy of such a forbidding coast it is easy to doubt if there could be any place for activity and life. On a Sunday afternoon, however, when we were crossing Independence Bay, I did not find it difficult to revise my opinions. The guanayes, the chief of the guano-producing birds, were flying homewards in unceasing thousands. In the distance would appear a little grey cloud, which drew rapidly nearer and broke up into its innumerable composite aviary units. The favourite formation, however, was the single file. One after another the birds followed on in a sinuous wavy line, coming from nowhere and stringing away into the distant mist. At other times they would change formation and advance in more definite and cohesive groups. The guanayes, who (to an amateur at least) are of the cormorant tribe, always flew low, scarcely a foot above the oily waters. The boobies, always greatly in the minority, flew high and dropped like bombs on their prey beneath the surface. Many places along the coast were black with innumerable birds. The aviary procession continued from all directions till dusk. It has been estimated that on one island alone, South Chincha, 5,600,000 birds make their nests. Seventy-six anchovies were once found in the crop of one guanaye.

Lima, the capital of Peru, with its 250,000 inhabitants, is situated on this coastal strip, but it is too well known a city to need description here. From this town I continued my journey along the coast to Salaverry, the port of Trujillo, a place of about 20,000 souls. Near here is the famous Indian city of Chan-chan. There were a number of Indian nations living along the coast before the rise and development of the Inca dynasty, with its remote capital in Cuzco. These mostly enjoyed an advanced civilization, building large cities, employing irrigation, raising temples, and practising to a remarkable degree of perfection the ceramic art. Among these was the kingdom of the Chimus, with its capital at Chan-chan. All these nations were ultimately absorbed or annexed by conquest into the Inca Empire. Chan-chan is about 5 miles north-west of Trujillo. One's first impressions are of amazement at the extent of the place, which reaches several square miles. It stretches from the sea almost to the foothills of the mountains. It is built entirely out of mud and adobes. On climbing the first mound a view can be obtained over the vast area covered by the city. It was in absolute contrast with the centres of Indian civilization I had hitherto seen. In Peru the domains of the dead are never far absent. On every side can be found the remnants of lost epochs and kingdoms submerged beneath the debris of time. Here was one more example, and it was no mean one. In the distance was the line of interrupted and misty hills. All the space lying before me was a desert of crumbling mounds, pits, streets, squares, houses, and palaces, represented now only by their walls. The city was surrounded by some stretches of sickly and intermittent green, while within the very precincts grew impudent and thorny bushes. A large square



CHAN-CHAN, MURAL DECORATIONS



SILENT FOR EVERMORE



LAKE TITICACA, BALSAS AT 12,500 FT.



BALSAS ON THE PACIFIC COAST

mound similar to that at Tiahuanaco was in the distance.

The wind blew keen and constant from the sea. To gaze over those remnants of the centuries of the past was to catch the sound as of a shadowy multitude. Innumerable hands toiled here, innumerable shoulders carried the burden of the daily task. The voices of little children cried again in the silent streets. Amid the rockings and surgings of humanity, generations laboured ingloriously here, too, to raise the temple and the fort, to build for themselves a city whose name should endure for ever. And yet the passing visitor stands to-day amid the bones of antiquity and tramples on the ruins of a bygone age. To this place, dried in the rainless atmosphere and burnt, season after season, by the tropical sun, they only come now to drag man's frame from its final resting-place. It is difficult to escape the conviction that these streets 'for evermore shall silent be'. The Indian civilization of Peru is just one of those many 'civilizations' which in the Christian era have been absorbed into Christianity, their values unrecognized, their worth unknown.

It is sufficient testimony to the paucity of the rainfall to see a place of this extent built entirely out of sun-baked mud. The numerous corpses which have been excavated have been perfectly conserved. Many specimens of cloth have been taken from the tombs and from buried houses in a state of extraordinary preservation, even the colours being little impaired. In 1925 a phenomenal and exceptional fall of rain did an incalculable amount of harm to the whole city, the mural decorations suffering irreparable damage. It would take a long time to plan out the entire area. It seemed to be built as a series of blocks or squares connected by streets. Some of

the walls were 20 feet high and 6 feet thick. Close against them were chambers connected one with another by narrow passages between high partitions. The roofs had long since fallen in, and the rooms were open to the wind and sun. From the eastern end the view extended to the sea. The main squares were clearly visible. Some deep pits had been excavated, showing wall-faces of round stones going down about 20 feet below the present ground-level. Out from these walls in many cases protruded small rectangular divisions marking, apparently, rooms or houses. The higher walls surrounded the major divisions. They were worn and eroded by the rain, principally of 1925, and mud and gravel had been swept down to the base. Sunlight and shadow provided the only relief and contrast. Chan-chan stretched right down to the ocean and seemed to fill the extent of vision on either hand, as far as the eye could take in the picture. It was a scene of silence, destitute of relief. A solitary donkey was contemplating my activities. With a distant murmur and a ceaseless and inconsolable dirge the sea was mourning the people of the past. The vulture was never far away, the faithful guardian of corruption and the tomb.

I followed the coastal plain north from Trujillo. It was not a desert similar in appearance to what one imagines Arabia Deserta to be. The trying glitter of burning sand was absent. The predominant colour was a monotonous grey, the result of lava dust mingling with the sand. Innumerable blocks of the same material littered the plain. The bones of animals and birds were lying about, bleached to the whiteness of a winding-sheet in the rainless atmosphere. Melancholy crosses were raised by the roadside as though death, indeed, were the only fit witness of the ravages of its hand. Presently we

passed through the village of Huanchaca. It was typical of many such fishing-villages along this coast. There was not a vestige of green in and about the little streets. The houses were made of innumerable thin sticks placed close together and plastered in patches with mud. The roofs were flat and made of the same material or else almost wholly non-existent, testifying to the arid conditions on the coast. Such flimsy and unsubstantial hovels, huddled together in a region where natural beauty must be at a discount, seemed miserable enough. The boundless ocean surged up to the confines of the streets, but no horizon could be more limited than that of the populace of Huanchaca. The people of these villages live by fishing alone. No fruit would grow, no animals could graze near the precincts of the community. From the cruel sea, hungry and ever unsatisfied herself, they snatched a precarious and toilsome existence. On a slight elevation was the little church where with similar labour they strove to save their souls. Outside the village and along the beach were the instruments of their toil, the boats or *balsas*. Such frail and insufficient craft could only be compared with the bark canoes of the far interior. They were made of reeds and were similar in design to those on Lake Titicaca. But the *balsa* of the fisherman of the lake surpassed that of his brother of the Pacific as a liner exceeds in stability and strength a tug. Thus in this interesting land the same design was being used 12,500 feet above sea-level and amid the western waves. It was clear that it was not the climate nor the race which had determined the instrument, but the scanty resources at hand in either case. Moreover, on the mountain lake the storms required a more steady structure than on the slumbering surface of the Pacific.

One evening at Pacasmayo I watched a solitary fisherman start on his expedition. His *balsa* was about 9 feet long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide at the stern, where it was broadest. It consisted in the main of two rolls of reeds placed together and tightly lashed, being thinned out at one end, while the other was cut off square. The bow tapered to an extreme point, curling upwards to a more marked degree than in the Lake Titicaca craft. It is an extraordinary thing how these mere rafts can ever be of service at all, but apparently they are. They are managed by a double paddle, and the one my friend boasted was merely a piece of split bamboo about 4 inches broad with nowhere special to hold on to it. He was a man of average height, sallow-faced, silent, and melancholy-looking. He sat down on the beach with his two daughters around him. The younger one was playing happily in the sand, but the elder, with the responsibility of ten years old, went about collecting suitable stones for Daddy and assisting him. It was a typical scene of the coast. He took about a dozen of these stones, as well as two of much larger size, and tied string round them, evidently to serve as weights for his net. Then he walked up the beach to where his *balsa* was standing on its stern, leaning against a stake. He carried it down and placed it by the water, the little girl anxiously clinging to the long curling bow, lest the greedy waves should carry the craft away. Daddy then embarked his nets and stones. He pushed the *balsa* deftly into the water and jumped in almost without wetting his feet. Coming in, in the same way, the surf carries the little boats up on to the beach. He seized his primitive paddle and worked away westward into the setting sun. The children watched him go. There was a pale stream of light over the water and the sailing-boats

were already making for home. The waves were fretting and playing restlessly among the stones. The 'gentleness of heaven' was on the sea. The ocean would long be shining silver under the moon before he returned.

Such is the actual coast-line of North Peru. Behind this immediate and barren strip are often found dunes where the drifting sand has been held together by a scanty vegetation. In other parts stagnant and infected pools fill the bottom of the hollows and easily account for the thin and sickly features of many of the dwellers. A great deal of the country has been watered by means of irrigation, and sugar is grown on a fairly extensive scale. An engineering scheme of considerable scope is now in progress in certain departments in order to facilitate the more extensive irrigation of the soil. It is evident, therefore, that though this region may contain much which seems to be devoid of popular appeal, it is far from being an economic incubus to the state.

CHAPTER XI

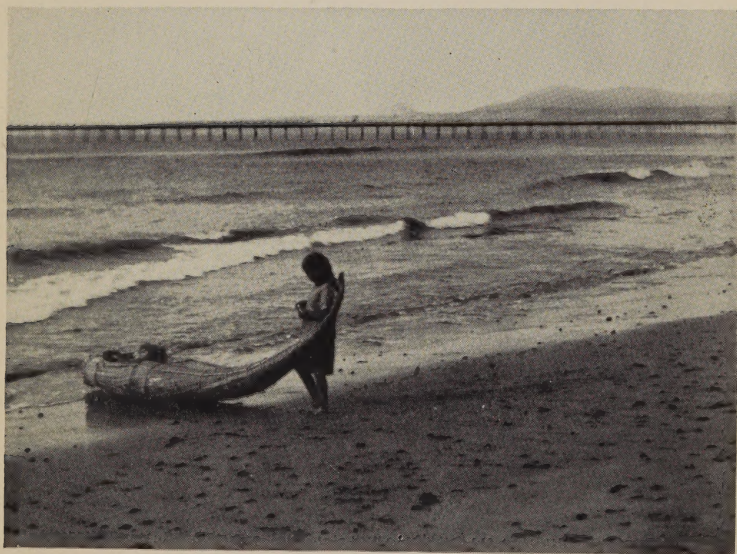
THE INTERIOR AGAIN

IN 1929-30 I made a brief journey through Northern Peru and the region inhabited by the Jivaros, or so-called 'Head-hunters' of the Amazon. I set out from Chiclayo and proceeded by motor to the end of the road, about two hours' journey, when it became necessary to secure a mule. This journey, being typical of the conditions generally met with in the interior, may, perhaps, be described in greater detail. In all this region of North Peru the Andes do not rise to the same remarkable heights as in the centre of the country. There are no snow-capped peaks and no magnificent glaciers. At the same time the mule route to the Marañon is a long one and the track execrable. The end of the journey does not leave the traveller at a point where the river is open to ordinary means of navigation. On the other hand, it is necessary to pass a number of rapids, of which the most celebrated is the Pongo de Manseriche, the Iron Gate of the River Amazon. This famous gorge is 2,712 miles distant from the mouth, and from the beginning of the forested land down to this point the Aguarunas or Jivaro Indians are almost the only inhabitants. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the journey presents any unusual difficulties.

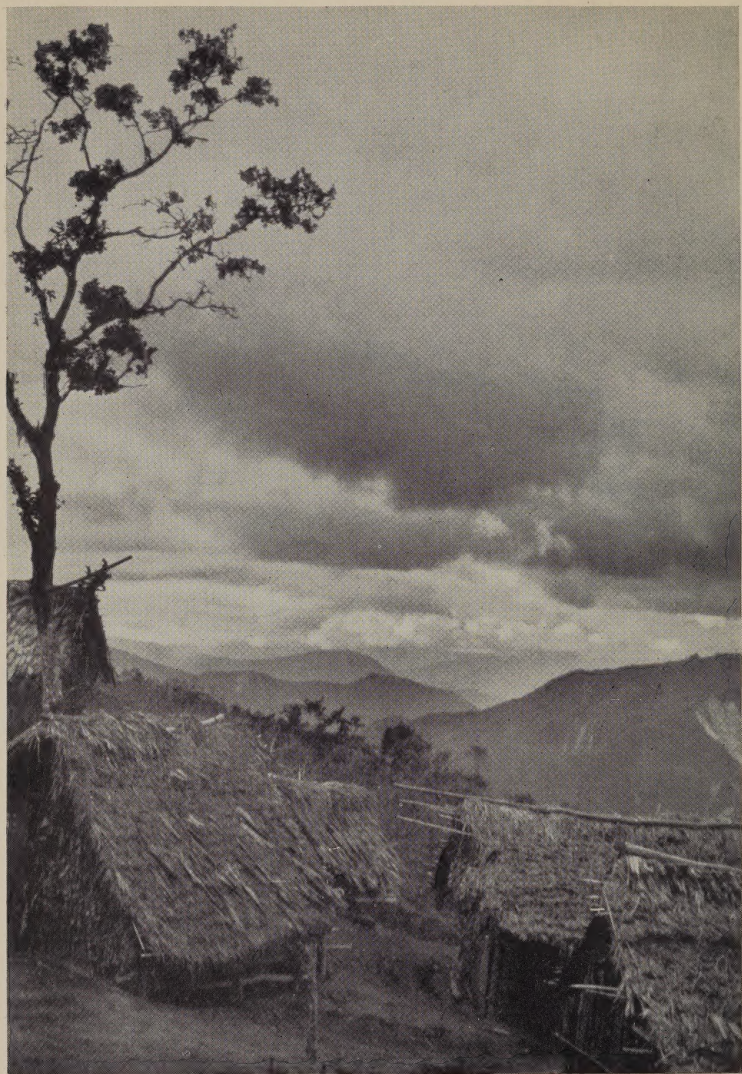
The ascent into the hills commenced on the second day out. We toiled up the side of a valley over an exceptionally steep track. The vegetation began to



EVENING ON THE COAST OF PERU



THE FISHERMAN GOES FORTH TO HIS TOIL



THE ANDES OF NORTH PERU

take on a peculiar appearance. The slopes, however stony and inhospitable, were covered with hundreds of small and stunted trees about 14 feet high. Not one of them could boast a single leaf or a vestige of budding productiveness. They were as trunks smitten for ever by the fatal lightning, but they were mastered and dominated by a host of small epiphytes. These were all of one type. They consisted each of a plant with spiked leaves springing out from the base. The leaves were about 6 inches long and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad, tapering to a point about 1 inch in length, formed by the folded edges of the leaf. Three varieties of cactus were in evidence, two of the pillar variety and one flat-leaved. The bird-life, which included humming-birds, was full of fascination. We continued our long climb into the sierra for 6,000 feet or more and the country underwent a gradual change of appearance. The arid regions of the coast were left behind and the climate was turning from dry to humid with every advancing step. It was now the season of rains in the mountains. The road wound in wearisome and interminable zigzags up the unending slopes. This route was a highway for animal traffic and, as I was travelling without baggage and only with an *arriero* (muleteer), we both overtook and met troop after troop laden with the country's products, or with imported merchandise, going to and fro. The track was heavy with mud and furrowed transversely, like a vast strip of corrugated iron, by the feet of the animals who for four centuries and with immovable conservatism had planted their hoofs in precisely the same places as their predecessors. My own mule was a proverbial example of the species, muleable rather than malleable, having acquaintances all along the road and moved by a profound desire to proceed in any direction but the

right one. Pushing upwards, the general aspect began to suggest the Lake District. There were but few trees. Open grass land covered the hills. Blocks of granite and stone were lying about protruding from beneath the soil, clothed with familiar moss. The view over the valley was of one of those great aerial perspectives so often seen in the Andes, where hills rise behind hills, peaks behind peaks, to the uttermost horizon. But this day the clouds were low and constant, drifting in fleecy masses round the heads of the valleys, jealously faithful to their charge of guarding confidences too sacred for the eye of the passing traveller. A small stream was falling perpendicularly over a ledge of rock. Billows of mist were eddying round us. There were no sheep to be seen, but numerous low stone walls divided up the pasture land, as among the heights of Cumberland. The ample mountain slopes led away to the pleasant valley below, where tropical fruits were growing in profusion.

The track continued through country of this nature to Cutervo, where I was under the necessity of getting a fresh animal. Moreover, I expected to find Victoriano Castañeda here, a Peruvian friend, who was taking a cargo over to Pomará on the Marañón. By going a different route I had overtaken and passed him on the road, but the meeting was effected in Cutervo. This town is a place of about six thousand people and the capital of a province. Mule traffic is the only means of access from the coast. The streets are narrow, with the usual central drains. The houses are roofed with red tiles, and the place boasts a plaza and church. The earthquake of 1928 did considerable damage here. Some of the houses collapsed and others are propped up with poles, while nearly all are cracked. The people of this region are interesting. They exhibit far fewer Indian characteristics than

is the case in Southern Peru. Spanish and not Quichua is the prevalent language. At the same time there are very few white families, and most are *mestiços*. No distinctive dress is worn, but the poncho is universal. These ponchos are long and made of homespun cloth dyed almost always to a uniform magenta colour, with a dye made from the bark of a tree very common here and known as *nandanga* or *nogal*. The little children have their ponchos as soon as they can walk. They are, of course, far handier than coats for riding purposes, as they not only cover the saddle-bags, but they serve as a blanket or anything else beside.

The man of the sierra and the man of the *selva* or forest differ greatly in their general outlook on life. The traditional *mañana* attitude is the outlook of the forest and of the plain. South America has been termed a continent of plains, and hence the appositeness of the generalization. In the cities and centres of commerce this attitude is rapidly passing, but in the forests and plains of the interior it remains unchanged. In the forests it is easy to do to-morrow what should be done to-day, and indeed, unless you make up your mind to do so, there will be nothing to do to-morrow. In the sierra men are industrious. The Indians toil with illimitable patience, picking with primitive implements at the soil which is their life. The fingers of the women are never idle, always spinning wool, whether they are walking to the market or waiting at home. The fruits of the earth are won with immense labour, the cold of the mountains needs to be warded off or conquered. Personal clothing becomes a necessity. But in the forest it is clear that it is not so. Apparent plenty is around. Yet such insurmountable bars stand in the way of progress beyond a certain point that the

game does not appear worth the candle. No stern necessities call to the advance on the impossible. A pleasant satisfaction is within the reach of all. The man of the forest is more hospitable than the man of the mountain. I have sat down at the table of a man in the forest and helped to consume his last meal with him, not knowing that he was destitute of any further supplies. It was generous, but it was natural to him. An innate sense of the hospitality of the forest, from which he drew his generosity, possessed him. And when that greater hospitality fails, as often and unexpectedly it does, then it is that tragedy is writ large. The man of the mountain has won his substance by the sweat of his brow. The earth to him is a grudging giver. With sacrifice and with tears he must extract from it his precious foods. Often it happens that his house may be well stocked, but it is impossible to purchase anything for silver or gold. All wealth is in the soil, and the soil does not yield her riches to a mere solicitation, as the forest does. The man of the sierra is not inherently inhospitable. He lives in communion with the elements of earth around him.

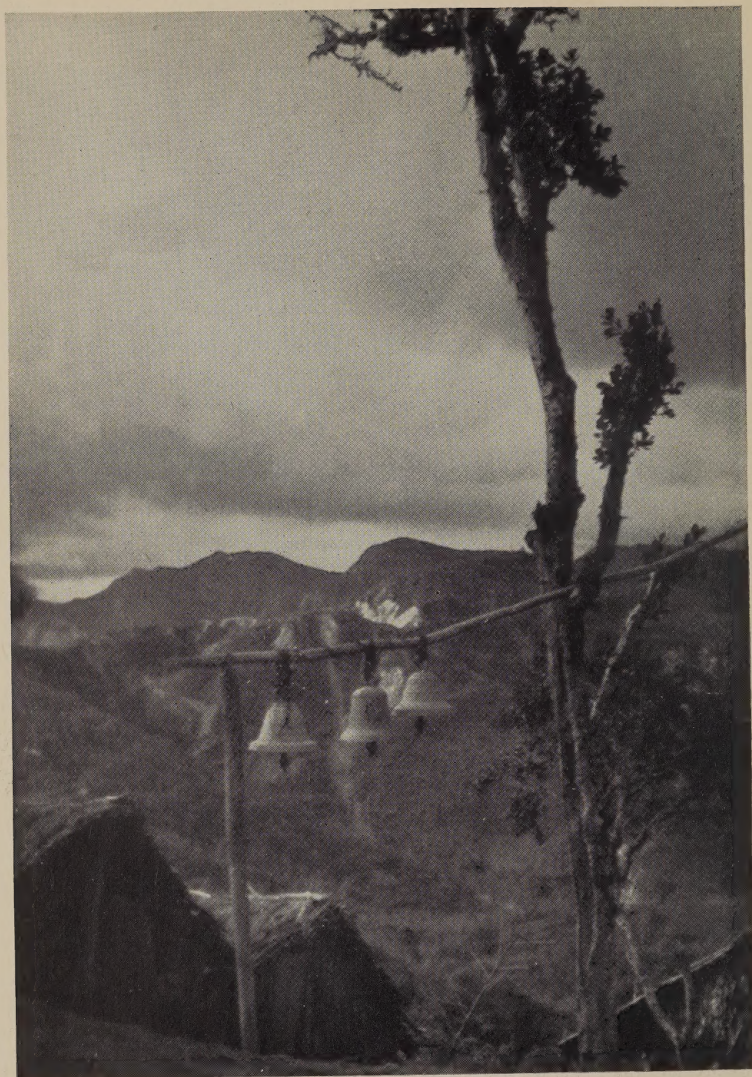
So in the sierra all the activities of life take on a sterner aspect than in the *selva*. Religion, which has played such a fundamentally leading part in the development of the Latin American nations, has itself been profoundly influenced by these two elements. The terrible uncompromizing fanaticism of the sierra can only be estimated by those who have had occasion to witness it. The scarcities of life and the phenomenon of earthquakes afford opportunities for the strengthening of credulity in providential and unexpected interventions. In the *selva* such faith-reviving crises occur with less spectacular effect, or, when they do occur, prove fatal. But one



THE SIERRA



THE SELVA



CHURCH BELLS, PIMPINGOS

mental characteristic is common to both parties. It is not always evident at first sight, nor does it appear upon the surface of things. It is found in the cast of melancholy which tinges the outlook of these people. Beneath a smiling temperament, in the hidden places of the soul, there is a profound conviction of the tragic sentiment of life. On the mountain or in the forest there is a sadness which can be felt by the sensitive spirit. In one case it is the sob of an oppressed race despoiled of their highland freedom, led away into oppression and captivity. In the other it may also be the mourning for a martyred past, but it is rather the dim solemnity of the forest around, the impotence of the struggle to escape, the fatalism of despair.

Damp, mud, and constant tramps from house to house after someone who was supposed to have *bestias* (mules) make up my principal recollections of Cutervo. But on December 31st a little man by the name of Muñoz had arranged to take us to Jaen. As he had not materialized by 10.30, we went and made an inquiry, verifying the fact that the animals had broken out of the field and were wandering loose and happy over the country. Mrs. Muñoz, however, had lit a candle to San Antonio, which was burning there in the room before the said dignitary's authentic likeness, and consequently they were sure to turn up. This they subsequently did, with the exception of one, which followed the next day. The efficacy of San Antonio on these occasions is undisputed, and with the innovations of modern communications and their exigencies, the lorry-drivers now have their saint, and no pious chauffeur omits to burn a candle to St. Christopher when he arrives home in safety after executing with success his running repairs. We set out, therefore, with eight beasts,

two for Victoriano and his baggage, one for myself and my luggage, which weighed 20 lb. and was contained in my saddle-bags, and the remainder for Señor Muñoz and his cargo.

We made our first *alto* or halting-place in Socotá. This was a little place of about seven hundred people with a huge church. It is situated on the angle of protrusion which separates the diminutive river Sugsi from its affluent, the River de Socotá, overlooking the confluence. It presented a typical picture of a village in North Peru. The place was dominated by the great church with its Japanese-looking towers, facing down the valley of the Sugsi to the east and south-east. By the time I had climbed up the slope from our resting-place in a house a short distance down in the valley, the sun was already behind the western heights and the village in the shadow. Right opposite the bluff on which the village stood was another similar one, the two facing each other. The opposite hills were known as the Heights of San Antonio, but they suggested forcibly the Heights of Abraham, who was probably equally worthy of the saintly title. They culminated in a ridge gradually steepening to the perpendicular. The soil was principally chalk, interrupted at intervals by grey and weather-stricken rocks. The northern valley was in the shade, but the sun was still pouring down the upper ravine of the Sugsi. A trail, prominent in the chalk, wound up the side of San Antonio's heights in wearisome zigzags as though traced by the finger of an idiot giant. The noise of the stream was always within hearing. Over the hill-side were scattered crosses as though to compel nature's witness to the piety of those reared within her immense and remotest citadels.

The next morning we left early and began a

further climb into the hills. It was a depressing day. Clouds and mist filled the valleys, while suddenly there would be a breach in the expressionless white and grey, and a ray of welcome sunlight filtered through or lit up the opposite bank of fog. The moisture was rolling around us in great volumes. Under these conditions we worked our way about 1,500 feet up a hill, passing through several patches of typical transition forest. The trees were small and laden with an intolerable burden of epiphytes. The tree-ferns almost resembled small palms rising to 15 and 18 feet in height and branching out at the top. From the summit no view was visible and only a white pervasive firmament surrounded us on every hand. We commenced the descent and a break in the vapours showed, far below, a peep of the trees and creepers carpeting the depths. An excellent guinea-pig provided us with lunch, which was consumed in a wee house of sticks about 5 feet 6 inches high and crammed full of pots and gourds innumerable.

The path was rich with flowers. There were the chattering yellow proletariat and the delicate white dweller of the slopes. The reds lifted up their heads proudly and refused to be lost among the crowd. The quiet, retiring blues and purples were the meditative philosophers of the river-banks. The streams run in the north, gay and careless, possessed of perennial and eternal youth, fed from every gully and by every little drop and trickle. The hills look down upon them in disdain, though nurtured in their very bosom. But the sylvan ferns crowd beside them and listen the live-long day to their incessant chatter. The trees bend over them, refreshed by their life-bringing flow. The great moss-covered stones endure good-humouredly their thoughtless chaff, seeking

to pass on some steadying advice for their long journey to the ocean. Few are who despise them, for they are the life of the land and its refreshment. Where they are not, men do not live and animals fear to seek repose.

We were now in an earthquake zone. Earth-tremors have always been common here, but on May 14, 1928, at 5.30 p.m., there was a violent shock which did material damage to a greater or lesser extent over the whole region from Chiclayo to Moyobamba, well in the interior. Since then, in different places, tremors, convulsive or inconsiderable, have occurred with daily frequency. We passed the night in a house known as Arenal, and at 4.45 in the morning such a tremor occurred. It was instantaneous, but it brought the mud on the roof down on top of us. At five there was another shock of less violence. We left at 7.15. All along the summits of the hills the surface was rent in great cracks and fissures by the earthquake, testifying to the power of the invisible and hidden force at work. Every hill bore evidence of landslides and gashes, and trees, trunks, rocks, and debris were lying in confusion down the slopes. Throughout the morning the rain was coming down with drab persistence and all nature was dripping and sad. The track was again furrowed like corrugated iron. Each of the little trenches, in which the animals laboriously planted their feet one after the other, had become a miniature ditch of mire and swamp. Every few yards perilous-looking marshes filled the entire road. The descents were steep and precipitous, the wretched mules half-sliding down over the treacherous clayey soil, while in other parts it was a scramble over great rocks and loose stones. We held on as best we could and by any part of the beast's anatomy, at one moment barely avoiding

precipitation over his head, at another clinging to his bows to avoid slipping down his tail. The cargo animals banged their burdens against trees, banks, and stones, or sunk into the mud, refusing to budge any farther. The cargo was then removed and the beast tortured into a spasmodic attempt at self-extraction, all hands hauling at his head. The muleteers, shouting and cursing, struggled along barelegged through quagmires and ponds. A little farther on we passed a mule, quite recently dead, at the side of the road.

That night we slept in Pimpingos. From here to the north and west there is a gradual downward trend of the whole country for many leagues to the valley of the Marañon itself. Pimpingos, properly so called, was in the dust. Since the earthquake the place was no longer. The little village had stood around a plaza with one or two adjacent streets. But it was obliterated, utterly destroyed. Not one house had remained erect, hardly was one stone left upon another. The ravages of time had not wrecked the relic cities of antiquity so completely as 35 seconds had undone the foundations of this village. Beams and adobes were lying about in forsaken heaps, nor could there be found the house of any Pindarus, elect to be spared from the destruction. Curved tiles were broken in a hundred pieces. The grass was growing green and fallow in the deserted square. A mule and a few cows were grazing there at their leisure and undisturbed. Eight months had passed since the fatal shock, but no one seemed to have recovered the heart to repair the ruin. Twenty-three out of a population of one hundred had been killed, or almost one-quarter. There is no doubt that if the region had been more populated and accessible, the occasion would have been registered

as one of the great earthquakes of history. At the same time modern buildings are infinitely more firmly founded than these rude mud structures. But, on the other hand, it is difficult to see how anyone could be killed by the fall of such flimsy scaffolding. In Pimpingos ecclesiasticism was in the dust. The church was completely ruined. The broken effigies and ornaments had been gathered together and a small shelter erected over them. The people's faith in some of their cherished images, which had survived in other regions but succumbed in this, had been seriously shaken. The three church bells had been carried up to the temporary village, and there slung on a pole from the fork of a tree. The new village was merely a miniature collection of huts on a col or dip joining two hills. They were little huts of the smallest practicable size, put together loosely from sticks, straw, and leaves. It only needed a few seconds to walk round every habitation. There were no gardens, no plantations, no streets. The only prominent objects were an open space about 10 feet square, which passed as the plaza, and one or two scraggy trees which overlooked the settlement in solitude. The evening wind was blowing up the valley from the north, comfortless and cold.

On January 4th we came down to the Marañon just outside the village of Choros. The famous river was here some 150 yards in width and flowing steadily at about four miles per hour between regular and definite banks. On the far side was a beach of rounded pebbles, while sand and stones were at our feet. The hum of the river was noticeable, and caused probably by the friction of pebbles along the bottom. Further down, the stream opened out to embrace a number of small islands. The Marañon was flowing in easy stretches and moderate bends,

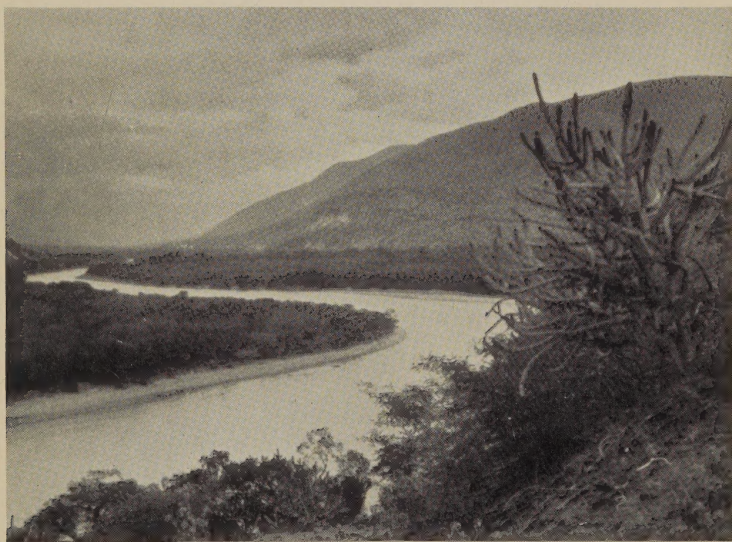
and the cattle were meditating in the shallows. The level floor of the valley was about a mile and a half wide, occupied by cacti and low thorny trees. The rainfall was evidently slight. Beyond, the Andes were sloping gently down, covered with bushes and coarse grass. The soil was clayey, with numerous embedded rocks and rounded stones. Ammonites of a spiral shape were common. After a while we left the river and went on through country of the same type till we reached the Chamaya affluent. This was a shallow stream flowing furiously between islands. We swam the animals across and conveyed the cargo and ourselves in successive journeys on a small raft made of four poles and 12 feet long. The next day we reached Jaen.

Jaen is the capital of a province, but it was simply an open space covered with ruins. The earthquake had destroyed all the houses and with them all hope. Many people had fled in fear and trembling. A few were to be seen about the ruins. Life was absent, existence alone present. Two-thirds of a year had passed and the people still seemed to be living in a dream. They were overcome by the magnitude of the disaster and dazed into an incurable coma while, day after day, the sun shone placidly on the vagaries of her child, earth. The earthquake was still the topic of conversation. Adobes were lying about in disorderly heaps. Beams were heaped on one another untouched. Possessions and goods remained unextracted from the ruins. The inhabitants seemed paralysed, unnerved. There was a general scarcity, an unnatural quiet. Right and left we asked for this and that and received the uniform and invariable answer '*No hay*—there is none'. On the new church alone had a roof of corrugated iron been placed. The old building was a mass of ruins dominated by

one or two twisted beams which caprice had permitted to remain erect. The broken images and remains of the altar were still there. A few huts of sticks and straw had been raised by the remnant of the stricken populace. At the entrance to the village is a ghastly avenue of dead trees hurled about in confusion, and embedded in the dried and cracking mud. Debris of every conceivable kind adds a sense of desolation to the scene. On the occasion of the earthquake the course of the Jaen river was changed and a lake formed in the hills above the town. A few days later this suddenly broke through in a mad torrent of mingled water, mud, tree-trunks, and rocks, carrying all before it and sweeping away every obstacle in its track. Such then was the condition in which we found the little town by the Marañon. Meanwhile to the west the forest-covered hills looked down in indifference and silence.



AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE, JAEN CHURCH



THE MARAÑON ON THE BORDERS OF THE FOREST



POMARÁ, LOOKING UPSTREAM



IN AN AGUARUNA HOME

CHAPTER XII

IN JIVARO COUNTRY

ON January 7, 1929, we left Jaen for Pomará on the Marañon, which marks the beginning of the Aguaruna or Jivaro country. On the eighth a curious thing occurred. We had sallied forth from a small village called Bellavista at 7 a.m. I was walking some distance ahead of the animals when after about half-an-hour I sat down to wait for Victoriano and the *arriero*. As they did not turn up it was obvious that I had taken the wrong track. I knew where I had turned off, and afterwards learned that almost everyone who does not know the road errs at the same point. As I had already gone a good distance down my route it seemed advisable to proceed, as it looked as if it must lead back again into the correct way. The path went right down to the bank of the Marañon, and then followed on through the low forest lining the margin. It was evidently a little-frequented part, as down by the river-side a wild deer suddenly broke away. Finally the path lost itself completely in a tangled mass of reeds and bushes.

It was impossible to push on any further, but just at this point a narrow gorge or *quebrada* ran down into the river. If it were possible to ascend this I knew it would not be difficult to find the trail, for it, too, must either pass across it or round the top. The *quebrada* was merely a small cañon, rocky and with almost perpendicular sides. No water was

running in it. The surface soil was loose and stony. Dry thorn-clad bushes and a burnt spiny grass grew up the banks. Steep side valleys branched out from the main axis. There was no path, nor any sign that communications ever passed through the region. I proceeded under a torrid and burning sun. The cliffs seemed to rise above one another in impossible vertical heights, killing all hope of escape. A puny sense of insignificance constantly oppresses the mind under such circumstances, as of a prisoner irrevocably immured within fatal and towering walls. Although water was comparatively close, everything in that *quebrada* bore an eloquent testimony to the aridity of the ravine. Presently it became clear that it was not possible to climb up the *quebrada* itself, and the only chance was to try one of the entrant valleys. I selected one which seemed to lead on to the higher ground by more gentle slopes and began to scramble up among the rocks, clinging on to the dry, burnt grass and planting my feet against the incipient cacti. The soil consisted of gravel with round stones loosely embedded in it. Every step sent an avalanche pouring down the valley and was followed by an anxious pause to see if a landslide was about to drag me helplessly to the ground. On reaching the top of the ridge, I found myself on a divide about 6 inches broad, descending on the one side into the valley from which I had climbed, and on the other by a perpendicular drop into another such miniature gorge. I walked along it until I came to a place where it was necessary to follow it farther up by cutting footholds with a knife out of the crumbling cliff-side. Above this was a wider slope leading upwards and covered with grass and a few bushes. Having crossed this until it was possible to see up to the top of the final cliff, I perceived at

once what could not be detected from the bottom, namely, that it was folly to try to proceed. The ridge terminated in a perpendicular climb, where a lost footing would have meant death. This discovery took the wind out of my sails. The sun beat mercilessly down, but after a brief rest I began the descent. Having arrived at the awkward place encountered in the ascent, I saw, however, that, as is often the case, the descent was a different matter. To sit down and consider the problem was clearly indicated. I shouted once or twice in the hope that Victoriano had sent someone on the search, but the only answer was the hopeless echo from the cliffs on every hand. Finally, I resolved to slide down on the opposite side to that by which I had ascended, and which at this point appeared to offer greater difficulties. The whole cliff seemed to be crumbling down behind me, but some of the larger and firmer stones offered opportunities for avoiding a fatal and headlong precipitation. Clothes were naturally torn to pieces and the soles ripped off my shoes, but having reached the bottom in safety I was able to make my way into the central *quebrada*, and it was possible to tie the soles on again with my camera strap, which was in my pocket. I found the end of the path down by the river—no easy matter—and walked back to the first point of contact with the Marañon, where a bathe was clearly in order.

The Marañon here was flowing through a broad valley divided by islands into various channels. The river itself was about 1,000 yards wide and was already a considerable stream. The islands were formed of low green pasture land, where animals were grazing. A kind of willow grew by the river-bank, and the general appearance was not unlike an English scene, flat and without any features of undue prominence to appeal to the attention. The banks were

composed of soft and treacherous mud. In the further distance a slight but distinct rise formed by a cliff about 20 feet high marked the limit of the lower valley proper. Beyond, the land rose slowly to the foot of the mountains, which were crowned with grey and sinister clouds. Some distance downstream the river narrowed to enter a solemn gorge, the naked cliffs rising steep and forbidding on either side. It was my last view of the great river before it passed into the long, unbroken stretches of forest which line the banks in silence to the very mouth.

I made my way back to the division of the paths and chose another alternative. Before I had gone far I recognized Victoriano's tracks (as he had been walking), even on the stony surface, the shape of his boots being somewhat unusual. Later, I found orange-peel belonging to a variety of orange we had obtained in Jaen and slightly different from the Bellavista oranges, which are usually eaten along this route. Beyond doubt, then, this was the right road. The path entered a *quebrada* parallel to the one through which I had wandered, and a wearisome zigzag took me out of the gorge. It was exhausting work in the hot sun, and we had started without *desayuno* in the morning. Here the country changed somewhat and there was a magnificent and cheering view down to the Chinchipe, a left affluent of the Marañon, where I guessed they would be waiting. But at the top the path divided and the surface of fine pebbles gave no indications as to which way they had gone. I took the wrong branch, but, discovering the mistake after a mile, retraced my steps and followed the other route. The afternoon was well advanced, and although the Chinchipe was in full sight, it was doubtful whether I would be able to reach it that night. The

country was open and green like a rolling moor. A brisk wind was blowing from the north-west, and only fatigue prevented good progress. By nightfall my destination was still distant. With the rapid fall of darkness, therefore, I selected a spot on the soft, tufty grass and proceeded to sleep, using my old Homburg for a convenient pillow. There was no moon, and the wide and starry sky was the only roof. The clouds were gathering in the north, and the lightning was constant and menacing. I was dozing there when there was a noise of feet coming down the path. It was the *arriero*, who had come out on the search and was returning home. Although he had followed over my route, we had by some means missed each other. As we were both thirsty, and as it looked like a stormy night, we decided, after resting a little, to make our way down to the river, where there would be more shelter. The darkness was pitchy. The path began to skirt a deep ravine and then descend it. I took a false step at one point and fell some distance down the cliff, but without serious injury. After this we made ourselves torches. We slept on a small beach at the bottom of this *quebrada*. It rained heavily during the night, but we dried our clothes before a big fire, swept away the damp sand, and slept on till morning, when we made our way down to a house close by where Victoriano was awaiting us.

The Chinchipe itself was a yellow, raging torrent, swollen with the rains in the mountains. But its passage in a dugout canoe did not present any difficulties. The river rises in Ecuador. Considerable quantities of gold were obtained from it by washing in the colonial days, but the industry is now in desuetude, although spasmodic proposals are made periodically to revive it. All this region is one of

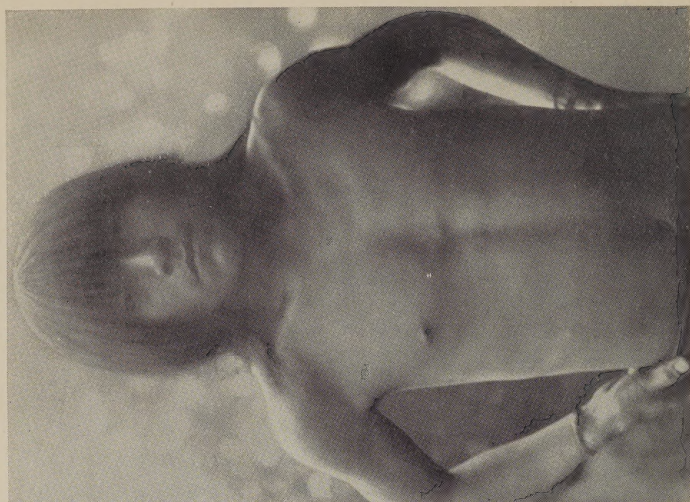
intense historical interest, and was formerly the stage of many conflicts between the Jivaros and the colonists. At the confluence of the Chinchipe and the Marañon there is an old settlement, Tomependa, now lost in the forest, with the remains of the church and some houses surviving. It was destroyed by the Indians. A similar fate befell Jaen de los Bracomoros, up in the mountains, the former Jaen, which is now extinct (like the Bracomoros themselves), except as a ruin. On the far side of the Chinchipe there was an immediate change in the appearance of the soil. The sides of the mountains revealed a reddish purple surface deposit, with pillars of rock suggestive of the Giant's Causeway. The path followed up a long *quebrada* in which a stream of slightly whitish water was running. It was the final stage of travel before entering the unmeasured leagues of the Amazonian forest. The cacti were thick in all directions, tall and branching out like trees of the wood. Further up, epiphytes appeared again, and then came an interesting transition stage, where they were growing on the branches of the cacti. The next day we began to pass through the incipient forest, still, however, climbing upwards. Bracken and ferns were growing on every hand. The trees were small, and one, unknown to me elsewhere, was especially predominant. The leaves were oval, about an inch in length, and its clean, grey trunk branched out into slender wavy branches, which leaned over the path and formed a natural arch. It gave the usually solemn forest the light and spring-like appearance of a grove of silver birches. From the summit of the climb we caught a glimpse of the Marañon pouring through a narrow gorge, racing and turbid. The vegetation soon began to change, and a palm, known as the *chonta*, was cropping up in profusion. From



A VISIT TO POMARÁ



A GOOD PLATFORM MANNER



AN AGUARUNA YOUTH

the bottom of the slope a few minutes brought us into Pomará.

Pomará is the station of a mission of an American denomination among the so-called 'head-hunters'. It is situated on a short stretch of the Marañon, running north and south and constituting the elbow of a bend. The Marañon, which, but an inconsiderable distance above, runs in shallow reaches and among low islands, with its course spread over a width of nearly a mile, is here concentrated into a narrow gorge 60 to 70 yards in width. The current is violent, perhaps six to seven miles per hour, and broken into tumbling waves by the irregularity of the rocky bottom. Small sandy beaches and rocks line the river. The waters swirl round the base of a cliff which rises into a slope some 1,000 feet in height. To the south a dark, low hill butts on to the river and closes in the view. Behind and all around stand ranges of hills one behind the other in succession, clothed with perennial forest, but revealing perpendicular and barely accessible summits. Landslides of soil and fallen trees marked the effects of the earthquake in the neighbourhood. The contrast with the higher reaches of the river is sudden, remarkable, and unexpected.

The Aguarunas live all down the river and on its affluents of both banks from Pomará to the Pongo de Manseriche. Estimates of their number vary from 2,000 to 7,000. Many of their communal houses have never been visited by the white man. They are a branch of the Jivaros, and with the Huambisas probably form about two-thirds of all the Jivaro Indians. They have a fair sprinkling of houses actually on or near the banks of the main river, but their chief centres are on the River Sinipa, a left affluent of the Marañon, in the Cordillera del Condor, an unknown

range dividing that river from the River Santiago, and on the Neiva, a right affluent. They are enemies of the Huambisas, and are also divided into hostile sections among themselves. The differences of dialect between them and other Jivaro tribes are slight. They know and constantly practise the art of reducing the heads of their enemies. The export of and trade in these heads is strictly prohibited both in Peru and Ecuador, but some of the Indians run quite a business in monkeys' heads thus reduced.

The Aguarunas are short, about 5 feet 3 inches or 4 inches in height, the men generally somewhat taller than the women. Their hair is straight, coarse, and black, and worn long, being cut to a level above the eyes. Many of the men wore a comb of Indian manufacture on the back of their heads. Hanging over in front of their ears they had a small tag or tail formed by tying a bunch of hair together. The forehead was steep or slightly receding. Their eyes were less slit-like than those of many Indians, but the nose was broad and flat with very wide nostrils. The cheek-bones were prominent and protruding, the chin slight. They did not convey an impression of great physical strength. The chest was not noticeably broad, and the muscles of the arms and legs were equally but not excessively developed. The toes were widely separated. The skin corresponded in colour with that general among the Indians, but some individuals were markedly lighter than the average, with light hair, though hardly so much so as in the case of so-called 'white' Indians I have seen elsewhere in the Amazon basin. A skin disease was common, characterized by ungainly patches of dark discolouring. Many had minor skin ailments, abrasions, and ulcers. The men wore a piece of cloth about 2 feet long, woven from their own cotton, round their

waists. The women had a complete dress or mantle of their particular style concealing both breasts. Most of the men wore a neck-band of white buttons and beads, and the women a bracelet of alternate rows of blue and white beads. Others daubed their face with a glaring red from a plant of the forest, while some had two or three purple horizontal lines, about one-third of an inch long and a tenth broad, painted on the cheeks. In some cases the women had a decoration of loose bones on the upper arm. One or two exhibited a small stick or thorn about 1 inch long inserted in the lower lip, while several men had small bamboo sticks about 4 inches long and one-third of an inch in diameter passing horizontally through the lobe of the ear and protruding in front, almost suggesting a clerk with a pencil behind his ear. Both sexes painted their teeth a dark purple.

The Aguarunas have a distinct style of speech. When they are excited, they talk with the aid of their entire anatomy in a high artificially pitched voice. They repeat the same word three or four times, and will proffer a lengthy discourse in short, staccato sentences. When a man meets a friend or enters a strange house, one or other of the parties will commence a protracted speech in a peculiar sing-song manner, dropping his voice at the end of each sentence, spitting with unfailing regularity on the ground, and never seeming to halt for a word. It is most interesting to watch and listen to them. The other will sit and interject remarks of 'Ha-a-a . . . Chu, chu . . . Apútkena . . . Tsi, tsi, tsi', and an assortment of selected grunts and expectorations. When anyone has a particularly astounding discovery to announce, or has been visited by an epoch-making brain-wave, he will walk up to his neighbour and pour forth a series of stop-and-start sentences in a high tone at a

bewildering speed, letting in the clutch with a jerk at the beginning of each sentence. When they are working in raft or canoe they will drift lazily down the stream, conversing in low tones, but when they see a rock or log ahead they will start to paddle with terrific and spasmodic energy and, unlike us, pour out an interrupted stream of monosyllabic interjections and exhortations, which increase in vehemence and violence till the crisis is past. When they meet their friends on the river they will call to them, starting and concluding the conversation by shouting their own names three or four times with the suffix '-ti,-ti', and intoning their voices at the end of each sentence. Like most Indians, they imitate birds and animals perfectly.

They do not use bows and arrows at all, and apparently have not often seen them. Their principal weapons are two in number, the blow-gun and the javelin. The latter is about 8 to 9 feet long, with a point of iron, and it is used for spearing fish as well as game. The blow-gun or *serabatana* is made of two opposed pieces of *chonta* palm about 9 feet long bound together and covered over with a vegetable tar or pitch. The usual dart is about 7 inches long and one-tenth of an inch thick. A number of these darts are carried in a cylindrical case made of a piece of hollow bamboo. To the outside is attached a very small gourd with a round hole in it. The gourd is filled with raw cotton. The skill exhibited in the use of these blow-guns is well known, and even in a very poor light the accuracy of aim is noteworthy. Once when I was in a chief's house, which was almost dark inside, a small bird about the size of a sparrow flew in and was flitting round. The chief took the gun and a dart, extracted a small piece of cotton-wool from the holder, wound it round the

base of the dart and inserted the latter in the blow-gun, which had a bone mouth-piece. In a moment he had fired and the bird fell instantly. Only the slightest puff was apparently necessary.

They live in communal houses, each of which is the home of several families. That of the chief at Pomará was about 45 by 15 feet, and elliptical in shape. The roof was supported on two main poles at the foci of the ellipse and was of *chonta* branches. On each side there were three 'beds' consisting of platforms of bark about 2 feet 6 inches above the ground, 5 feet long, 4 feet broad, and closed in on three sides, somewhat resembling horse-boxes. The Aguarunas do not use hammocks. There were twenty-one of them, men, women, and children, in the house which was walled in all round with split pieces of bark, having a door at each end. Above the 'beds' were platforms. Open basket-work and pots were the chief ornaments. The latter were all of one shape, with a small base, bulging sides, narrow neck, and wide mouth, and I counted sixty-one of them, made of a brown clay blackened all through from constant use. The largest were 1 foot 6 inches in height. There were three fires alight in the house. The Aguarunas cook their *yuca* (known in Brazil as *macacheira*), plantains, and so forth in these pots, tying leaves tightly over the top. They infallibly recognize when the point of culinary perfection has been reached, and do not need to remove the leaves for purposes of inspection. Over one fire was a tripod. Five *serabatanas* were standing round a single pole, but these blow-guns are, as a rule, made at a special place—about five leagues west of a spot down-river known as Nazaret or Winchu.

They are polygamists, but on a limited scale, as I did not hear of a case of anyone having more than

five wives. An unusual number of children are to be seen among them, and they appear to maintain their position numerically better than any other lowland tribe which I have met. But those who know them best think that they have declined in numbers rather than the reverse, owing to certain causes. Thus it is said that 50 per cent. of those around the Pongo de Manseriche died in an epidemic of influenza some five years ago.

Their religion is dominated by their inability to conceive of death as a natural process. It is always due to the machinations of some enemy, the influence of some invisible and perhaps distant foe. Every death therefore sets in motion a series of endless feuds and wars of revenge. Disease is looked upon in a similar light, being generally, but not always, due to the malicious intent of some dreaded spirit. There is no way to avoid such a spirit except by fleeing from him. The religious attitudes of the Indians undergo superficial changes with their contacts with civilization, but this characteristic attitude to death and disease is readily recognized among the Aguarunas. The medicine-man occupies, among all the Jivaro Indians, a place of greater importance than in most tribes, and he is expected to employ his functions to the harming and murdering of enemies, in addition to curing the evils of the group to which he belongs. Of their various customs of religious significance the most interesting are those connected with the practice of manufacturing reduced heads. These feasts are often long and complicated, and vary among different sections of the people. The Jivaros are divided into opposing factions amongst themselves, and internecine wars are continually breaking out. These wars may be due to numerous causes and not infrequently arise over the question of

women. It is from the heads of enemies killed in such encounters that the head-trophies are made. The process also reveals differences from one region to another, but it has been most minutely described by Karsten.¹ The scalp is slit down at the back of the head and together with the facial skin it is removed. It is then boiled, taken out of the water, and placed on the top of a stick to cool. A ring, formed of a vine, is attached to the trophy at the neck and the scalp is sewn together along the cut previously made. Then small stones, heated in the fire, are dropped inside and rolled round. But the real reduction in size is obtained by filling with hot sand repeatedly, whilst the head is turned round and round in the hands of the operator and the features preserved by moulding with the fingers. The work may occupy several weeks and requires considerable patience and skill. The head is finally reduced to the size of an orange or one-quarter of its usual dimensions. Through the feasts associated with the operation, the trophy becomes a fetish or object bringing good luck to its owner.

¹ R. Karsten, *Blood, Revenge, War and Victory Feasts among the Jivaro Indians of Eastern Ecuador*. Smithsonian Institute. Bureau of American Ethnology. Bulletin 78. Washington, 1923.

CHAPTER XIII

RAFTS AND GORGES

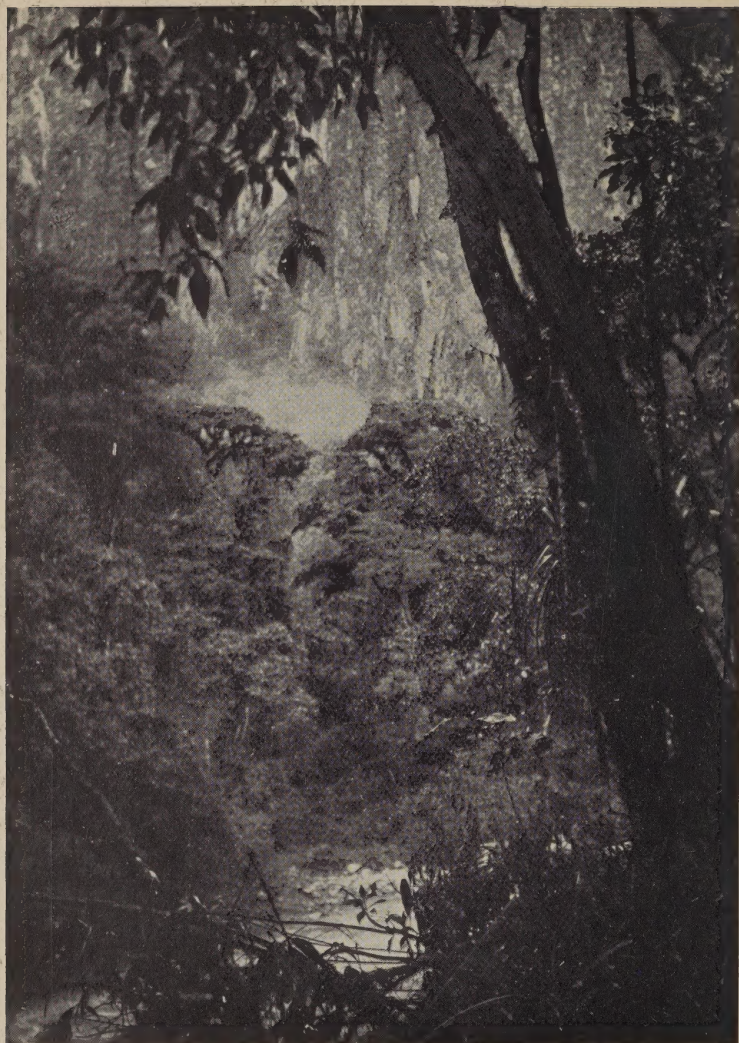
FROM Pomará I wished to descend the Marañon. The navigation of this part of the river is seriously interrupted by gorges or *pongos*. Of these there are a number below Pomará until the final one, the Pongo de Manseriche, is reached. This gorge marks the limit of navigation of the great Amazon River, and launches and steamers can ascend to this point. The Manseriche is a remarkable and impressive sight, although it is famed as a dangerous and risky pass. Indeed, at certain seasons of the year some of the *pongos* are far from being child's play and considerable care is necessary in navigation. Many descriptions of them exist. The best known is that of Wertheman, summarized in Raimondi's *Peru*. He states that the Manseriche is a perfect cutting in the cordillera to a depth of more than a thousand feet. At its narrowest point he considered the width of the channel to be about 100 feet, but this is certainly an excessively low figure. He made an attempt to pass the gorge in the steamer *Napo*. The *Napo* penetrated some distance against a current varying from six to twelve miles an hour till they arrived at a point where a wall of rock seemed to obstruct the entire river. However, this point was passed with the utmost difficulty and they continued the attempt in spite of severe damage to the craft. But about a mile farther up the current became swifter, the whirlpools were more dangerous,



THE DAILY ROUND



GETTING READY FOR A JOURNEY



FOREST AND GORGE

and the only alternative was to return. Wertheman was also, in 1878, the first explorer to pass the Pongo de Rentema, just below the confluence of the Chinchi. In this dreaded pass the raft narrowly escaped complete destruction, being hurled over the edge of a cascade in a rocky chasm between perpendicular walls.

A geological survey of the Manseriche was made recently by Singewald.¹ Above the *pongo* is an intermontane valley, which closely resembles the Amazon plain. The entrance of the cañon is two miles below the mouth of the Santiago tributary, where the river is 2,000 feet broad. It then narrows to 600 feet, widening again to 800 feet at the Pozo—a small bay on the right bank. From the Pozo to Puerto Melendez is a distance of five miles, but the true cañon occupies a stretch of only four, in which the river narrows to just under 300 feet. Of the whirlpools the two most dangerous are the Asua Huacangui—‘Thou shalt weep bitterly’, and Atun Huacangui—‘Thou shalt weep greatly’. Massive ledges of hard rock project at intervals and deflect the current. Below Atun Huacangui is the narrowest and deepest part, the walls of sandstone rising sheer to a height of 1,000 feet and the depth being about 170 feet. The change in the *pongo* due to a comparatively slight rise in the river is extraordinary, and even at the same level there is an enormous difference, depending on the pressure above the gorge. At low river the water may be calm and even placid, but in times of flood the passage is a raging and highly dangerous torrent, giving rise to whirlpools, rapids, and steep, rushing waves, which swamp the canoes of the rash. According to Muro² the navigation of the

¹ Joseph T. Singewald, *Pongo de Manseriche*. In Bulletin of the Geological Society of America. Vol. xxxviii. 1927. Pp. 479–92.

² A. Mesones Muro in *Boletín de la Sociedad Geografica de Lima*. Vol. xxix. 1913. P. 52.

pongos is becoming gradually easier in course of time, owing presumably to the levelling work of the river and local alterations caused by earthquakes. They are, generally speaking, most dangerous when the rain is falling on the mountains or when the snow is melting rapidly in the higher Andes. The river is then rising and the water pouring through the gorges at tremendous pressure and velocity. Some, however, are risky at low water, owing to the presence of rocks in the channel. It is therefore impossible to choose a perfectly ideal time for navigation. But low river is undoubtedly preferable, as the Manseriche is in her most clement mood. In the winter of 1928-29 the Marañon was exceptionally late in flooding, although in these sub-andean regions the seasons are often capricious. A *pongo* therefore signifies a gorge formed by the river cutting through the mountains, the channel being generally narrow and hemmed in by rocky cliffs. The word is of Quichua origin and confined in its popular use to Peru and Ecuador. It is not the same as the rapids of the Brazilian Amazon tributaries and adjacent regions in other neighbouring republics, which are generally formed by ledges of rock interrupting the course of the river. It is advisable in the interests of safety and prudence to travel with someone who is acquainted with the *pongos*. The Indians fulfil this requirement as well as one or two traders, but there are few civilized people who frequent these stretches of the river. The descent can be made either in the dugouts of the Indians or by means of an ordinary raft or *balsa*. The former is more rapid, but the latter probably safer.

After much fussing around it seemed impossible to get anyone to undertake the journey. An influential chief had just been killed down-river, and this had

set a whole host of quarrels alight again among the Indians, and no one cared to go even a part of the way. Finally, a tough old fellow, who rejoiced in the appellative of Puhúpata, offered to take me down to the settlement called Nazaret, or Winchu, for a *machete*. Winchu is only three hours by river from Pomará, but owing to the presence of several dangerous *pongos* the Indians prefer to go round two days by land, only covering a very short distance by raft. It was thought that as Puhúpata himself had his house, several wives, and a mixed assortment of sons there, I might be able to get Indians to take me farther on the journey. However, I let it be known that there were six *machetes* to divide among any persons who would take me down to the Manseriche, commonly referred to as the Pongo, and leave me on the lower side of it. Shortly afterwards there turned up in Pomará a lusty old Indian by the name of Chavit, who was taking a varied bag of parrots upstream to sell. He lived a few minutes' journey down-river at a place called Tutumberos. He was a traveller of note among the Indians, and apparently had no quarrels with anyone. The usual pay for a journey to the Pongo is two *machetes* each with three Indians; but when Chavit heard what was going forward he offered to take me down by himself, and that without any delays, if he could pocket (apart from a total lack of pockets) the six *machetes*. He affirmed that he was quite capable of managing the affair solo, and he guaranteed his fair name and reputation as a traveller as security that he would deliver my body unharmed in the house of Señor Graña at Puerto Melendez, immediately below the Pongo. So on the advice of Mr. Winans, the missionary at Pomará and a gentleman of indispensable utility to anyone making this journey, I closed with Chavit.

On the morning on which we were due to start our journey, Puhúpata and Chavit had made a small raft to take me down to the head of the *pongos*. This raft consisted of half a dozen poles, about 4 inches in diameter and 9 feet long, lashed together with vines. In the middle they had fixed a tripod, or rather a 'quadrupod', of four legs, which were driven into the poles of the *balsa*. On this structure all the baggage is hung. A single transverse pole of about 3 inches in diameter was fixed on supports in the stern as a seat. When these primitive arrangements were completed I embarked. But on the two Indians doing so the *balsa* nearly turned completely over, so a further delay ensued while they went and cut some more logs to add to it. This being accomplished, we left at 9.50, with all the Pomará staff on-lookers, retainers, hangers-on, and Indians, assembled to see us off. We crossed the miniature *pongo* in front of the house in fine style, with the waves lapping over the raft, and stopped farther down to pick up a small and intelligent boy who had adopted the name of Silas and was going to Nazaret. Just below, at Tutumberos, we stopped again for Chavit to deposit his parrots and *machetes* and confer with his family. Here we succeeded in embarking two more small boys.

The two Indians sat or stood right on the front of the *balsa*. If in the former position, they merely dangled their legs in the water. They were armed with crude *ad hoc* paddles cut from the *chonta* wood, which they merely used to avoid rocks and obstructions. Puhúpata was a tough-looking customer. His skin was exceptionally dark and leathery, and looked as if it had been tanned on his body by some unusually efficient process. The Inquisition would have made no impression on his personal hide,

He was short and stocky, and the sort of bloke you do not choose to pick a quarrel with on a dark night at the cross-roads. He talked much more than Chavit, in rapid grunts and monosyllabic explosions, pouring forth a stream of two-worded blunt remarks. Chavit stood up to paddle, but he showed a marked disinclination to work when anyone else could be found to do the job, though I afterwards discovered that he was fully competent when he was the only man on the spot. His skin was lighter and he talked less. He had a flat, receding forehead and a friendly face. He was a pleasant old soul and a good companion, although he spoke no Spanish. He never grumbled at anything, but every hour or so he would approach me and remark 'Casa Graña—machete', which had reference to a *machete* which I still owed him and which I had promised to buy him in the trading-post of Señor Graña, below the Pongo. I had paid the Indians before the journey, which may seem to some a confession of weakness, but to me it was a rational proposition, as they do not like to carry all their acquisitions through the territory of their enemies. They do not fail in their contracts if properly treated—unless they have had previous experience of dealing with the whites.

The singular charm and beauty of these reaches of the Upper Amazon are beyond my power to describe. It would need the pen of a ready writer, endowed with the grace of a Ruskin, the observation of a Darwin, and the sweet poetry of a Tennyson, to do them the barest justice. Looking up or down the river, the hills loom up, peeping over each other's shoulders, as though manœuvring for a share of the coveted stream. The cliffs rise sheer from the water's edge, prison walls indeed, but clothed with an infinite variety of which the gaol never dreams,

Down by the swirling flood are rocks of all imaginable forms mingled with scattered slates and shale. Sometimes the whole mountain-side seems to be supported on perpendicular plaques. Sometimes these plaques lie close one upon the other, while individual slabs are strewn around the little bays or shelving beaches form upon them. Other rocks are jet-black and polished to a sparkling sheen by the kindly friction of the waters. Others yet are indented by countless round holes of all sizes, as though a heated gas had bubbled through them. Small beaches of grey sand appear, with miniature waves chafing their margins. The trees are not of remarkable height, but great flowing vines hang over them. Sad though the forest may often be to the dweller beneath her gloom, to the traveller outside she seeks to appear festooned with Nature's drapery as for a perpetual carnival of green. The palms lean daintily over the banks, and the mosses cover the stones like a mantle of rich and splendid velvet. Unfamiliar birds fly low over the water and call to one another through the woods. From time to time the beautiful blue morpho butterfly flits to and fro.

Amid such scenes the *balsa* drifts lazily down. Sometimes we descended head first, sometimes tail first, sometimes sideways, and sometimes corner first. Sometimes we were turning round and round in a whirlpool or even sliding upstream in a backwater. Suddenly our peace was disturbed by falling into the Pongo of Canguerasa, formed by a purple-red cliff descending into the river and hanging over ready to fall on us. Much grunting, splashings, and verbal explosions from Puhúpata and Chubi—an Indian whom we had embarked at Tutumberos, followed, together with the usual rocking and flooding of the *balsa*, and we shot out of the passage. A few minutes' journey

below we stopped at the junction of a small stream, the River Milana, where we disembarked and started off through the forest. The trail was a typical Indian path, quite unfit for mules. We climbed up a steep slope for an hour or more, employing all those parts of the anatomy which had been predestinated to such good works. We then followed along a ridge, sometimes only a foot wide, separating two precipitous valleys. It was not easy to look aside, as the Indians moved quickly and a trip over the path would have hastened the journey in a vertical rather than a horizontal direction. It was possible to catch, however, peeps of great ravines and mountains, forest-covered, steep, impressive, and magnificent. The approaches to the vast and level monotony of the flood-plain of the Amazon are through an incomparable combination of difficulties of surface and gradient. Isolation and inaccessibility make these scenes inhospitable to the traveller. Secret and natural fortresses have been created here in abundance for the play of the imagination. Ragged patches of soil and verdure were ripped from the side of the mountain by the force of the earthquake. Beauty and grandeur, the stern and the repellent, the lovely and the appealing, are mingled together in the compass of one picture. Not many steps have penetrated such country except where flow the broader streams. As yet we are only scraping the surface of the unknown. In the forest itself there were but few palms, and these mostly the *chonta*. The ferns were sporadic. The epiphytes with their narrow bending-over leaves were common, and one with great heart-shaped foliage was growing everywhere. Buttress and supporting roots sustained many trees. There were still notable differences between the character of the undergrowth here and that of the lower plains.

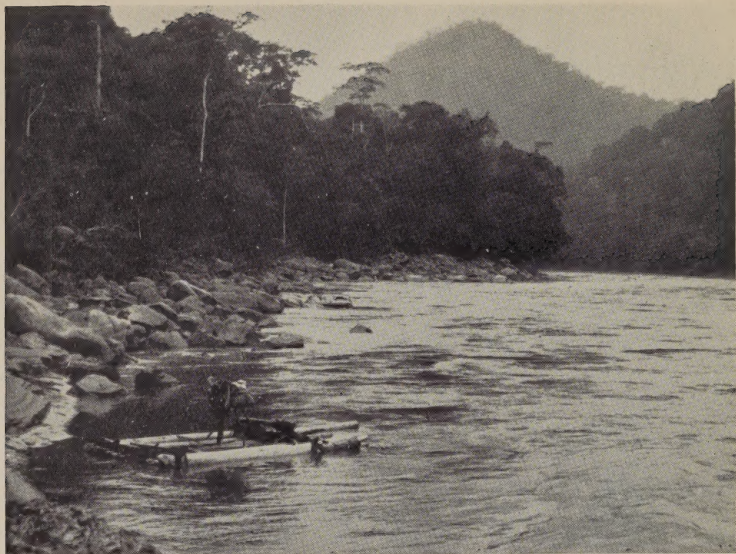
The next day we were off early and the route lay down the *quebrada* of the River Wavasu. This part of the journey was nothing more or less than a glorified paddle. The 'River' Wavasu was a stream of inexpressible loveliness, a fairy gem in the heart of the continuous forest, sparkling and glittering in the early-morning light. It was about 20 feet wide, with waters of irreproachable purity running limpidly among stones and sand. Small fish about 6 inches in length were whipping to and fro between the rocks. Luxurious mosses clothed the surface of the boulders and concealed their ungainly angles. A whole variety of ferns leaned over one another. The tree-ferns bent disconsolate over the water, ever condemned to make and remake fleeting friendships as the stream bubbled on gaily to the sea. The big morphos were like moving jewels of blue and of beauty sent to adorn these inmost brooks. Of the butterflies in general it can only be said that they formed a portion of the loveliness which they had made more lovely. In the moan and fret of the all-recipient Atlantic fluvial messengers from countless sylvan scenes such as this are lost for ever in the common waste. From the stream we passed into the forest, pressing on over uneven ground. Every now and then we stopped for a rest. Once Chavit disappeared and we heard much digging, cutting, and grunting going on a short distance away. I wished I had gone with him, for presently he reappeared with several large, spiny roots. He cut these in half, and they were found to be composed of a number of cells about the size of a small egg filled with a pleasant fluid, which one sucked up and then scraped out the lining, which was a white jelly-like substance about one-eighth of an inch thick. Finally, we came down again to the Marañon at a point where it was making a hairpin



AN AGUARUNA AT HOME



PUHÚPATA, THE PILOT



RAFT AND RIVER



THE FINISHING TOUCHES

bend, coming from the north and flowing round again into the north-east. The river was about 100 to 150 yards wide. Sandy beaches, rocks, and stones lined the banks, and here and there were patches of grey soil, the pools in them being discoloured as though oil had been mixed with the water. From here a short walk took us down to a point where we made another *balsa*, on which we floated down to Winchu.

On Wednesday morning there was phenomenal activity going on in Winchu. I went down to the beach and found twenty-one children playing about, reinforced from moment to moment by new arrivals. Under the shade of a big tree overhanging the water were six dugouts, the largest being about 30 feet long. In one corner were eight to ten baskets covered with leaves in the typical Indian fashion, a pile which ultimately increased to scores. The morning was dull and sunless. Dozens of men, women, and children were busy in the canoes. Women arrived, each with a baby on her back, and a large basket beneath it. Boys were carrying long javelins and blow-guns. I noticed here a special kind of dart for a blow-gun, about 2 feet long. Clay pots of the usual shape were being dumped on the beach in deposits. Fishing-gear was conspicuously absent, although further down the river the Indians fish largely. One woman appeared with a basket on her back full of parrots, a bunch of black feathers, a beautiful red and purple macaw, two old *machetes* and two pots in her hand. The men were working with *machetes* and stripping the bark off the *balsa* we had previously used. But in vain I poked around looking for Chavit. He alone was absent.

The previous evening I had agreed to take a youth by the name of Facunda down to the Pongo with me,

at his own request. I afterwards regretted having done so. The youth could speak a few words of Spanish, but he was a chronic grumbler and complainer, not nearly so steady as Chavit, and exceedingly timid. He also wanted to maintain a higher scale of living than I do myself in the interior, and was always for buying chickens and so forth. He now turned up and explained that the chief in Pomará had summoned all the Indians up there and, consequently, they were preparing for a journey. The *balsa* was to be remade for a long trip, and we would leave downstream almost immediately. I walked back to the hut and found Chavit contentedly eating *yuca* and sharpening one of his new *machetes*. The old chap, being now about the richest Indian on the river, had sublet the contract for making the *balsa* to other Indians. Chubi was also there. I had announced the previous day that I was in the market for buying monkey-nuts, or rather a sufficient quantity of them for a journey of a few days. Chubi, however, presented me with an enormous basket of them weighing about 100 lb. He evidently had an exaggerated idea of the physiological capacities of my tribe. Monkeys and monkey-nuts were, as a matter of fact, our most useful food on the trip. The down-river raft journey was pleasant enough. There were a few *pongos* to be passed before we arrived at the Manseriche. But for the most part the river flowed in stretches ranging from 200 yards to a mile in width. In the broad and shallow reaches the bed of the river was littered with tree-trunks, and had the *balsa* fallen across an obstruction the current was sufficient to have placed us in an awkward predicament.

Some strange commodities are consumed among the human race, and I have eaten some such myself.

But Chavit must have few rivals in his tastes in the matter of food, nutriments, stimulants, condiments, or whatever class the commodity to be discussed falls into. In one of the *pongos* the waves had come tossing over the raft. The two Indians had acquired in Winchu an Aguaruna clay pot, well used and blackened through and through with the cooking of generations. This pot was resting on the poles of the *balsa*, but in the tumbling water was broken into several large pieces. As soon as we were in a calm stretch Chavit came and sat himself on the 'seat' beside me, broke off a piece of the pot, inserted it into his mouth and began chewing. It crackled up like overdone toast. He chewed away for some time, finally spitting some of it out as a black and wizardly looking liquid. Here is a field which my friends from over the Atlantic who are addicted to the gum-chewing habit would do well to explore. Here, moreover, is true economy, a spirit worthy of an Aberdonian, where one can not only consume the article cooked, but the instrument of its concoction, and indeed, among cannibal nations, the person of the cook himself. I reflected with pain on the immense possibilities of which the passing of the clay age has deprived us. Chavit ultimately consumed nearly the whole pot in this way.

Wassú was an interesting place. There were two Jivaro communal houses here. The entrance to that on the right bank was protected by a sort of tower which consisted of a platform supported on four poles about 25 feet high. This is used for observation and defence in war-time. Boiled fungus provided a pleasant repast. After the meal I washed my hands in the correct Jivaro style. Water is contained in large oval gourds with a small round hole at one end. This has to be held in both hands and the problem,

therefore, is how to wash them under such restrictions. The feat is accomplished by putting the head back and sucking in a large mouthful of water. The gourd is then put down and the water spat out over the extremities in question. This again was a lesson to me in the art of living, and the possibility of teeth-cleaning and hand-washing in one movement was clearly a step towards simplifying a man's diurnal duties. Two Indians from Wassú accompanied us down the river for some distance. They sat on the front of the raft with Facunda, and all three played flutes most of the time. Chavit took up a position close to me and stoically chewed pot. Just below the confluence of the Sinipa we fell into the Pongo de Huaracayo. A whirlpool whisked the raft round and round in a way calculated to induce immediate giddiness. Meanwhile an Indian standing in the stern placidly continued to divert us with his melody. We were shot out of the whirlpool, only to be dragged into another more violent. The *balsa* was sucked down by one corner, but the Indians rushed to the opposite one, and so here and there to offset the suction. The gentleman with the flute, however, calmly continued his music, having evidently assumed the office of an Orpheus of the waters.

In the more stable and stately stretches of the Lower Amazon River a certain order seems to be the criterion of fluvial progress. But in these altitudes the streams advance by virtue of their total disregard for uniformity. Yet they flow on constantly, some through tunnels of green, others by sandy strands; some over chattering pebbles, others through giant culverts of rock; some broad-bosomed and quiet, others hasty-stepping and turbulent; some white with foam and chafing, others dark-laden with the cares of the hills; some afraid to launch away from



GETTING ON WELL TOGETHER



A WELCOME LANDING PLACE



RAFT-MAKING

the joys of home, others anxious for the turmoil of the world. Wise and solemn, careless and gay, they all flow down, a brotherhood of little trickles or a single lonely drop at a time. But presently the river assumed an appearance more nearly resembling the middle and lower Brazilian stretches. The current ran between islands fringed with broad beaches of pebbles and grey sand. The tree-line was irregular. Palms known in Brazil as Assahýs began to appear, chiefly on the left bank. In spite of the periodical sight of Indian houses the shores appeared solitary and the forest untenanted. Tall reeds were bending in the breeze. The whole bed of the river was strewn with sunken trees and logs, past which the current roared and bubbled. A feature of the forest was the extraordinary frequency of the *pau mulatto* tree of Brazil, which formed in places veritable groves. In the afternoon there was a torrential downpour for nearly an hour. In the clear air after the rain there stood out, distinct and lofty over the mist of the forest, a solemn range of hills 2,000–3,000 feet in height, steep, inhospitable, and forest-covered. I knew that where these crossed the river was the famous and dreaded Manseriche, the portal of the plain. At 4.30 we passed the mouth of the Santiago. This is a dark-water stream coming down from Ecuador. Afraid that the rain might have swollen the river and added peril to the passing of the gorge, we strove to pull up to the bank here. But the current was too strong, and we were swept past into the mouth of the gorge whether we wished it so or not.

The broken water commences below the Santiago, and at 4.50 we were entering the gorge. The scene was one of a beauty and grandeur peculiarly its own, and one of those few scenes which, being often described, do not disappoint. The ravine is zigzag,

with a length of five to six miles and, as already stated, a depth in places of 170 feet. At first the hills sloped downwards in a gentle decline. The rocks were remarkable throughout, and at this stage the banks were littered with countless smooth black stones, as though painted or tarred by some colossal freak of nature. Thin shelves of rock were jutting into the river, forming deep, mysterious, and receding caverns. Further in the slopes became perpendicular. The afternoon was already advanced. The walls of rock shut out the dying light and invested the cañon with a strange solemnity. Mosses grew in abundance, as though in a country glen rather than one of the most celebrated and dreaded gorges of the Amazon. Plants were hanging with despair and tenacity on to the steepening cliffs, and trees were still clinging to the available soil. Pensive trickles of water, drop after drop, added an insignificant volume to the great depth of the gorge. The petty channels of streamlets were marked by diminutive yellow-brown tracks. There were no tree-ferns, and few butterflies or flowers. The brightness of life was paralysed by the imminence of death.

The hills closed in, steeper and steeper, till only vertical walls were visible. Stones of all sizes and shapes were strewn about: some like an alligator; some like a human form; some literally suggesting 'serpents interlaced'. The water was swirling but quiet, and the *balsa* drifted slowly down. Suddenly there would be up-burstings from beneath, the awakening of the spirit of the depths. Gradually we drew near the famous and perilous spot—Asua 'Huacangui,' Thou shalt weep bitterly—where most of the accidents have occurred. A ledge of rock ran out into the channel. It seemed like the approach to a supreme crisis. It was an age-long wrestle

between the sierra and the river. The drama was still vivid on the stage. But the river had been victorious. The mountains were torn with eternal anguish and revenge. Even the Indians dropped their chatter and only spoke in apprehensive whispers.

But the giant of the turmoil was asleep! Quiet, lest you should wake him! Noiselessly pass on, lest he should but turn in his dreams and consume you in a moment! I looked back. The evening sun was behind the hills and the gorge was in the shadow. A last narrow gleam was playing lightly on the waters. Within a few minutes the cliffs had fallen away on either side, and we had arrived at Puerto Melendez, the highest port for steamer navigation in the lowland *selvas* of the Amazon.

CHAPTER XIV

FOREST AND STREAM

At Puerto Melendez I said good-bye with sincere regret to Chavit and Facunda. I had greatly enjoyed the company of these Indians. Far from being dogs of the forest, I had found them to be genuine companions and the best of associates. I had learned not a few lessons of permanent value by contemplating their simple processes of life. The gulf which separated them from me was not one of kind but only of degree. In the background of our joint experience there loomed up constantly the same sentiments and the same desires, and whatever solution to handling the problem of existence I had found myself to be of lasting value I was anxious to be able to share with them. Faults they had, and plenty of them. We had not, indeed, been involved in those circumstances in which the baser side of their natures might have been revealed to me. But the fact that these men with whom I had passed the *pongos* were polygamists, thieves, and probably murderers did not arouse within me conviction of superior righteousness. Rather it seemed to bring to mind the many occasions in this very land of Peru on which men had been murdered and even tortured in the name of the Prince of Peace.

I embarked on the launch *Tupac Amaru* for the downstream journey. It was a typical craft of about 30 tons, as seen in these parts, towing a barge alongside for the further accommodation of passengers

and cargo. It would be a prime error for any aspirant to the captaincy of such a launch to suppose that the least knowledge of sea- or river-manship is in any sense necessary at all. Any ability to distinguish between land and water is utterly superfluous. To be able to identify the nose from the tail of the launch is similarly a wholly dispensable qualification. It is much more important that you should be a crafty salesman, able to convince your clients along the river-banks that your goods are worth at least ten times their obvious value. Whereas on the one hand you need have no eyes at all for red and green lights, your nose should, on the other, be adequately adjusted to distinguish the differences of scent between good balata and bad. Our captain appeared on the bridge once during the voyage. For the rest he was far more skilful as a manager of a department store on a small scale. The voyage was uneventful. The Marañon or Upper Amazon in its general aspects is similar to the reaches of the same river in Brazil. The water was low, and great logs and sunken trees were obstructing navigation. For some time the long line of hills, level-topped and regular, marking the final close of the flood-plain, was still visible to the west. All around was flat, monotonous, and dreary. We entered the River Morona, but were unable to ascend far owing to lack of water. While calling at a balata port known as Copal, some illustrious and talented genius made the phenomenal and startling discovery that this would be the last visit of the launch before Carnival. The captain, therefore, immediately decided to pass the night in port and celebrate it then, at which profound but hardly moving decision the whole company wagged its tails, so to speak, in unfeigned satisfaction. A box of German beer was extracted

and opened, together with a large demijohn of crude alcohol. By midnight the captain was lurching indefinitely to and fro between the launch and the land, uncertain as to which was his proper element. The chief officer was seated beneath my hammock permanently employed in being violently sick through the grating of the hold on to a sack of beans ultimately destined for our consumption. I had him removed and deposited in a hammock. The pilot was lying on the little platform which served as a 'bridge', his bare legs hanging over the edge. The remainder, whether belonging to land or launch, were all more or less in various stages of inebriation. With the first light of dawn the pilot, having amassed both legs and hoisted them on to the same level as the rest of his anatomy, jangled the engine-telegraph violently in a well-intentioned effort to awaken some interest in the journey. The engineers were incapacitated, but a stoker was just about to start the works going when the captain appeared from inside the store and intimated that there was a new passenger to embark. So a further delay ensued while the said passenger was collected, together with his trunk, rubber-bag, parrot, and other articles for personal use and consumption only, after which we slid off down the river.

At the mouth of the Huallaga I disembarked. From here I wished to take the steamer which makes the journey from Iquitos to Yurimaguas. From Yurimaguas it is a short distance to Moyobamba on foot, and from this latter town there is a mule-path back to Cajamarca and the Pacific coast. The steamer arrived on January 26th and left the same night. The Huallaga was exceptionally regular, running in long, wide stretches with periodical bends and curves. Like all the affluents of the

Amazon it had its own distinctive appearance, difficult to convey in words. Low wooded islands hemmed in narrow and straight channels which in turn disclosed a distant outlet into the main river above. The banks were a light green, less stricken with monotony and uniformity than is often the case with the more dreary streams. In some places there was a great disparity between the height of the trees, a disparity which made the giants stand out like overpowering arboreal monarchs. In others they all alike were lost in an inextricable tangle of lianas. Palms were growing in characteristic groups, and the *chonta* was there in veritable groves. Small and shimmering specimens were peeping out through the crowded foliage. Beds of reeds bent in the breeze and brooded over the beaches of grey sand. Lonely lakes opened on to the river, and there seemed to be stretches of marshy and unforested land behind the immediate banks. The water was cleaner than that of the Marañon, but muddy enough. The river was fairly well populated, and the settlements happier-looking than those in Brazil. The houses were built with high thatched roofs, and the canoes were all of the dugout type.

Yurimaguas is a place of some 3,000 people. It has a surprisingly pleasant aspect and shows a combination of the village styles of the sierra and the river plain. A large plaza stands in the centre. Many of the houses are made of bricks brought from Iquitos. The stores are well stocked and much of the retail business is in the hands of Chinese and Japanese. The situation is high above the river. At this point the Huallaga is bordered by a strip of low and level land about 200 yards wide. Immediately above this rises a cliff and on this most of the town has been built. Along the lower strip are the

appurtenances of the little port. To the south-east, in the dry season, is a wide stretch of white sand. The land above has been well cleared, palms standing in groups, while the houses become more scattered and simpler as the outskirts are reached. The streets are long, the principal one running parallel to the river. At the north end is the radio station. The town and foreshore are connected by a number of precipitous paths, while the main descent to the port is by a row of cement steps. The place has little productiveness of its own, nor is agriculture developed in the immediate neighbourhood. It is essentially a port of transport, an outlet for the growing exploitation of the Huallaga in its stretches above the rapids. The Huallaga rises in the Andes near Cerro de Pasco and its middle course is but very slightly known, but in the neighbourhood of Tarapoto and Lamas the plantation of cotton has been encouraged with considerable success and a beginning has been made with the growing of coffee. This cargo is brought downstream on *balsas*, which can be seen floating slowly down the river almost every day. The *balsas* are big rafts made above the gorges, and carrying a considerable bulk of the native products, with a small house on top. This method of navigation has gone on to such an extent that in some parts there is already a scarcity of easily accessible *balsa* wood, only certain very light timbers being used for the purpose.

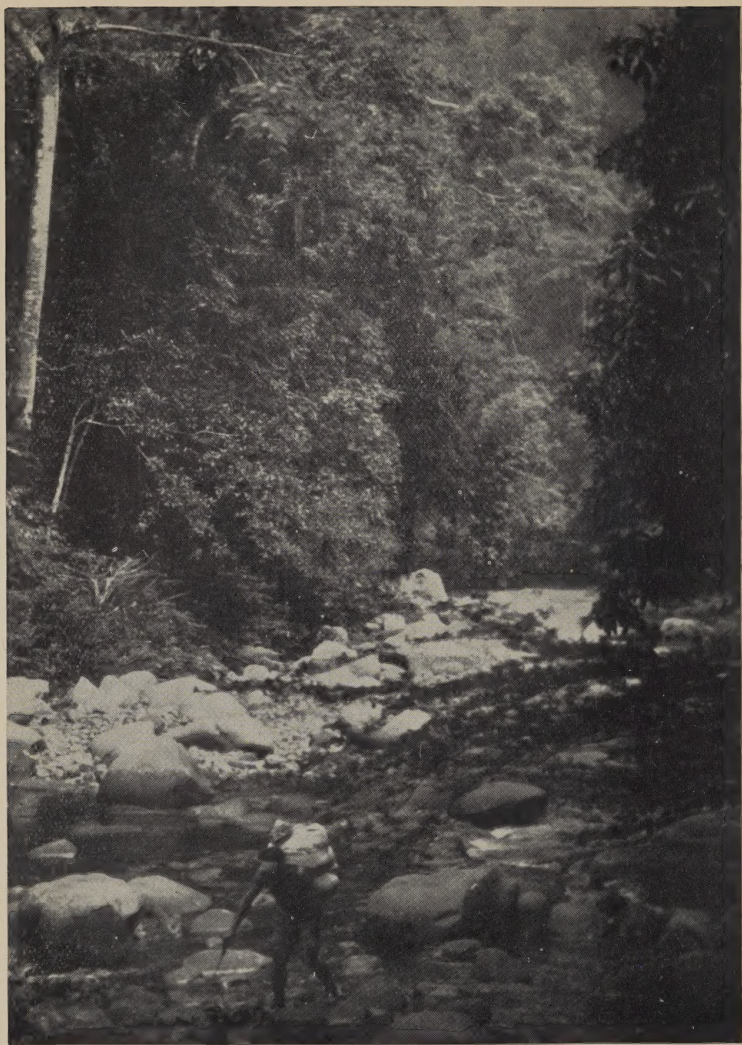
The people of the neighbourhood of Yurimaguas are largely Indian. They do not wear, however, any distinctive style of clothing. A few speak Spanish, but in Yurimaguas the usual language common among them is Quichua. Amongst themselves and in their homes they employ their own dialects. This region on the map is a sort of rectangle with its long



AT THE MOUTH OF THE HUALLAGA



CROSSING BY THE FOOTBRIDGE



NEGOTIATING THE TRAIL

side running north and south. It is formed by the Marañon to the north, the Huallaga to the east, the Huallaga and its affluent the Mayo to the south; the Mayo and the Cahuapanas, which flows into the Marañon, to the west. In the days of the former reductions or missions among the forest Indians the region constituted one of the most important spheres of activity in the sub-andean forest zone. The padres found a group of strong and linguistically allied tribes, of which the principal was the Maina, living to the north of the Marañon. These Indians, known to students as the Cahuapanas, live in the region to the number, perhaps, of ten to fifteen thousand. They are civilized to-day, but still conserve a number of their customs, painting their faces and using spears, Pan's-pipes and other Indian utensils. Their chief centre for trade is the village of Lamas on the River Mayo. They prefer to reside in the deep *quebradas* among the foothills of the Andes, each subdivision or clan occupying a separate valley. Some are peons belonging to recognized owners, but many are free. They are addicted to quarrelling among themselves and certain groups are only permitted by the authorities to trade and travel along defined routes, thus avoiding conflicts and bloodshed.

Travelling overland is done on foot, and the usual cargo for an Indian is 100 lb., but exceptional carrying feats are recorded. Cargo is carried on the back, slung from the forehead, as the paths are too enclosed above to permit the use of the head in any other way. Passengers can be carried in the same manner, and it is customary for women to utilize these facilities. A kind of chair is made in which the passenger sits, and it is then slung on the back from the head in the same way, while the occupant faces to the rear. One Indian alone is sufficient for

persons of normal weight. Men can travel in this style if they wish to, but the Indians will generally only go in pairs, relieving each other, the expense, of course, being double. It is recorded that the journey was once made by a foreigner of sufficient obesity to require four peons in relays. Heavy cargo is suspended on a pole. There are animals in Yurimaguas, but most of the trails will not admit of their passage. So having obtained a peon or *carguero* for my baggage, I set out myself on foot for Moyobamba. On clearing the little town the path immediately entered the forest. In spite of the prolonged dry season the route was muddy in many places. Obviously travelling was exceedingly uncomfortable in the height of the rains. In many parts this mud was covered with an apparently hard crust, inviting a heavy tread—with disastrous results. Once in, it was difficult to extricate one's feet. Miniature sloughs were crossed by a single thin branch thrown across them, the negotiation of which was more a question of balance than good intention. My *carguero* grumbled unceasingly. He was a Tarapotino, or native of Tarapoto, mercilessly saddled with the names of Lauriano Lulati Regi. 'In Tarapoto', maintained Reggie, 'the paths are wide and two *cargueros* can pass anywhere without cutting into the *monte* (forest).' Such paths, he evidently thought, were not to be found elsewhere—no, not in Lima, nor even in London. The subject of rivers and streams in a general way, and their negotiation, may be dismissed by saying that in this stretch of the journey we crossed over 100 of them, basing the calculation on a count over a representative period. These waterways fell into four classes, from the traveller's point of view. There were (1) the mob of streams that could be stepped through or over in a moment; (2) the deeper ones

which required wading or swimming; (3) those which flowed in deep but narrow *quebradas*, traversed by a single pole, a fly's leg, or some equally efficient device from bank to bank; (4) those which required a canoe.

On the third morning out we suddenly broke through the forest on to the banks of the Yanayacu. Once again, after my brief sojourn in the lowlands, I was to gaze upon the mountains; for, away facing the orient and rising sun, the ramparts of the Andes were looking down on the unending plains. The Yanayacu was running swiftly past, interrupted by low islands of pebbles and sand. On the opposite bank stood the village of Balsapuerto, remote, sleepy, and isolated. Numerous Chayavita Indians were about here. They wore clothes and passed as civilized Christians, but they were painted in miscellaneous ways, chiefly with horizontal bars, a deep-red dye being laid on thick. Long cords hung round their necks, doing duty as necklaces, and they carried their *machetes* trailing down their backs attached to a similar string. They had wrist-bands and arm-bands, and the usual implement was a pole about 9 feet long, smoothed and shaped like a bow, but apparently not generally used for shooting. Later on, by the Cachiyacu, we met more of them on a journey. They were, they said, going to a salt quarry to extract rock salt, which, as a fact, is their principal occupation. We slept that night at Cachipuerto, a single house close-nestled under the Andean bulwarks. It stood on a high and well-cleaned hillock on the left bank of the stream, here about 30 yards wide. Peak behind peak, the hills opposite climbed heavenward in serried rows of forest and rock like the marshalling hosts of an irresistible army. The soil was red, and boulders of the same colour were

standing erect in the bed of the river. The afternoon sun and the glittering sand, the absence of human activity, and the quiet drone of the river seemed to convey an impression of the inertia and laziness of the scene at such an infinite remove from the confusion of mighty workings. At Cachipuerto we fought with beasts as at Ephesus. Seven dogs and a cat wandered at liberty over the premises. We acquired an old hen for our consumption, and during its dispatch the seven came and contemplated our proceedings, four in the front row and three in the back, earnestly waiting to make merry off the skeleton of our feast. Ultimately the cat snaffled the major share.

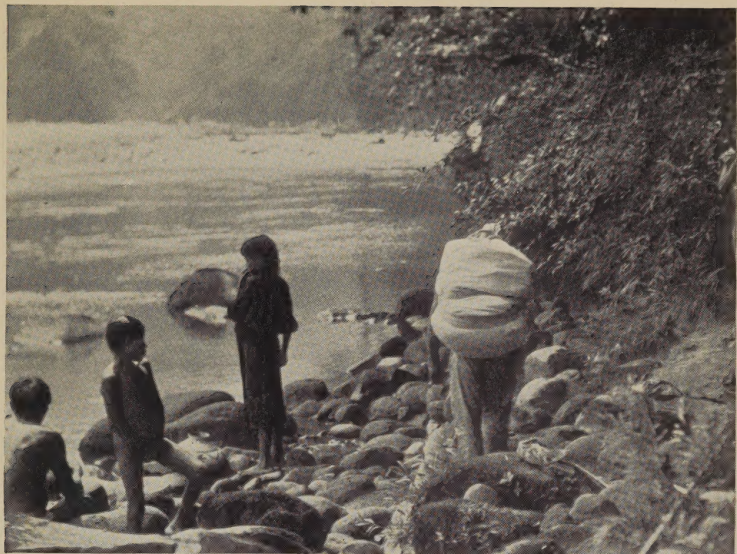
The next morning we were off while it was still early. The sky was dark with clouds, and under the added shade of the forest it was difficult to detect the transition from the morning moonlight to the first rays of dawn. We crossed the Cachiyacu by canoe, subsequently wading it nine times. The day was as dull and heavy as a theological controversy. Very soon we began our climb into the hills and for some hours we worked steadily upwards. The path led over red and white sand, and we were constantly clambering over great sandstone blocks. The vegetation became thinner till finally we reached the top of a ridge, along which we followed. There was an annoying sensation of always being within a few steps of the summit and yet not arriving. Presently I looked back. In the remote distance was the appearance of a sea, blue, infinite, and far-away. It was the lowland forest. The haze was hanging over it, sombre and sad, like a half-raised curtain on the stage of a tragedy. Down through a cleft in the hills we could see it clearly distinguishable against the clouds, yet verging on the confines of invisibility

itself. The views from such points of vantage conveyed some idea of this strange region where the sierra and the *selva* mingled with each other in majesty and isolation. The greatest of all rivers was here rising in the longest and one of the mightiest of the mountain ranges of the world. In its general formation the sierra was as broken and accidented as the *selva* was level; as steep as the latter was flat; the streams as torrential as the lower rivers were regular and wide. But one aspect was still the common inheritance: the inevitable forest was clothing the whole, as yet reluctant to release her rule.

In the middle afternoon of this day we arrived at a sort of low tunnel with floor and sides of yellow stone and the top completely closed in by branches, foliage, and leaves. Following down this we came out on a remarkable and unexpected sight. In the heart of these mysterious mountains the River Pomayacu formed a beautiful and imposing fall. The river was about 20 yards wide, and the dark waters poured into a profound and circular pool. The water was sluggishly swirling round. A few drops of foam drifted on the surface of the murky depths. The outflow from this natural cistern was over a curving ledge of rock like the rim of a vast and cyclopean bowl where giants could satisfy their thirst. From this ledge the stream poured on to a steeply sloping slide. Ramparts of rock ran out from the sides in the form of horizontal piers. Below, the waters jumped again on to a second slide. Farther down they hurled themselves into a narrow, twisting channel, girt about with the imprisoning granite and set at an even more dizzy angle. Still below again was the final rest, a deep, black-stricken pool where all was silence and

apparent sleep. Closing in the scene was a perpendicular cliff. I gazed at the strange picture for some moments, silent with a 'wild surmise'. It was evident that the path lay over the circular ledge of rock. But with the rain in the hills during the day the torrent was pouring over with such force and volume as to make the passage appear exceedingly hazardous. A slip on the downward side would have resulted, if not fatally, at least in the fracture of one or more limbs. I afterwards learned that when the rains commenced it was the custom to make a small bridge from stone to stone farther up the stream, but as this was the first precipitation of the season the precaution had not yet been adopted. Eventually we traversed in trepidation and aided by the support of heavy poles, the *car-guero* devoutly making the sign of the cross before taking the perilous steps. It was not the kind of passage to utilize merely for exercise or recreation. The previous year a post-carrier was swept over by the current and barely escaped by a miracle with his life, the mail being lost. The total fall must be more than 100 feet. By way of recapitulation, this locality is on the River Pomayacu, which is a left-affluent of the River Cachiyacu, which is a left-affluent of the River Yanayacu, which is a right-affluent of the River Paranápura, which is a left-affluent of the River Huallaga, which is a right-affluent of the River Marañon, which is (according to some) a left-affluent of the Upper River Amazons or (more commonly) Amazon, or (according to others) the main stream of the said river.

The next day we negotiated the divide between the rivers Mayo and Paranápura, left-affluents of the Huallaga. We were now in the heart of the foothills. The climb followed the valley of the



CHAYAVITA INDIANS



HUMAN CARGO



THE TREE-FERN

Yanayacu, distinct from the previous river of that name. On the opposite side of the stream giant and threatening cliffs rose to form the perpendicular and inaccessible sides of the outposts of the Andes. Where the angle of slope permitted the slightest hope of success, plants, creepers, and scraggy trees tenaciously clung to scanty footholds, never defeated while life could snatch a tardy subsistence from the inhospitable and stony soil. The path itself was nothing more or less than a glorified scramble. Hands, feet, and all other serviceable members of the body were pressed into the labour, and a heavy stake was necessary to guarantee the more precarious steps. The day was sunny, but in the afternoon the sky became overcast and heavy rolls of thunder boomed among the summits. When the rain began it was more like the release of a pent-up flood than the deposition of conventional drops. The path, which had hitherto been merely wet, now became a foaming torrent, through which we ploughed our way, struggling against the stones which were being swept down on to our legs. Where normally the streams crossed the track, miniature lakes were formed which presented new problems in wading. A slip over the steep side of the path would have been attended by serious consequences. But the rain passed and once more the pavilion of heaven was bare. The streams were mad with joy. No wonder there are floods in the lower basin when the rains have begun in the Andes. Every little gully was full and foaming, every trickle alive with gladness and with glitter. The returning sun was scintillating on a thousand drops of moisture pendant from every weeping leaf. The branches of the forest were wet and dripping, each discharging an infinitesimal quota to the sum-total of the whole.

Just at this time we came out on the river, which had never been far from us. Once again it was to gaze on a beautiful waterfall. The stream was tumbling down over the rocks at a steep angle, a yellow and foaming flood swollen by the refreshing rain. It seemed like an impatient, irresistible monster. It was impossible to hear each other's voices. But the surroundings were as magnificent as the fall itself was sublime. On the far side the flank of the mountain was like a frowning and impregnable fortress. The uppermost heights led down to a lower ledge, from which again there was a vertical and dizzy leap to the ground. The bare and naked rocks formed the facing of the citadel, patched with tropical plants where they could find a footing. Four streams were pouring over these heights, falling from the giddy altitudes in unrestrained and headlong leaps and shattering on the lower stones. In their fall they cleared the tops of trees growing on intermediate ledges, and the striking phenomenon made it appear that the vegetation was here growing within an arcade of water. The same impression was recorded by that scholarly traveller who writes under the pen-name of H. J. Mozans¹ when he passed this spot twenty years ago, journeying in the opposite direction. We slept a short distance farther on our way, and the following day arrived at Moyobamba.

¹ H. J. Mozans, *Along the Andes and Down the Amazon*. 1911. P. 402.

CHAPTER XV

THE MARAÑON AGAIN

MOYOBAMBA is the capital of the Department of San Martin. It is a small place of 5,000 people, decadent and destitute of all productive forms of activity. The town is spread over an area that would suffice for a city of ten times the population. The streets are long and straggling, the plaza large. The population has remained stagnant for many years, and the place is probably destined to recede into even further unimportance. Other centres in the department nearer the Hualaga are developing at the expense of the capital. Such places have an exit for their cotton and their coffee, which goes downstream to Yurimaguas and Iquitos. But Moyobamba has no outlet by water to the Amazon River, and she is fourteen days to three weeks' journey to the nearest motor-road. Consequently, for example, sardines, which in Yurimaguas, farther in the interior, cost 35 cents a tin, in Moyobamba cost 80 cents, which is indicative of the general conditions reigning. It is difficult, therefore, to see any future for the place, and even the building of the proposed railway would benefit other centres of population before this. The town is of traditional and historic interest, founded in colonial times, and enshrining, probably, in the stones of its foundation the latent causes of decay and corruption. It stands about 2,800 feet above sea-level, or 2,300 feet above Yurimaguas. It combines the characteristics of a

sierra and forest population. The houses are of mud and adobes, the climate pleasantly warm, and tropical fruits grow in abundance. The site is on a series of bluffs overlooking the River Mayo and about a mile from the banks. The view over the valley is one of singular charm, giving some faint idea of the resources still at the disposition of favoured man for ultimate development in this region. Plain and woodland combine to provide a pleasant, varied type of country reaching to the foot of the mountains, which on all sides form the limit of the scene.

The mule-track to the coast from Moyobamba passes through Chachapoyas, and so to Cajamarca, which at present is the terminus of the motor-road. A few hours outside the town is the village of Rioja, where the making of panama hats is the principal industry. We left Rioja on February 8th. The animals were six in number, of which one was sufficient to convey me and my belongings in saddlebags. The rest were taking cargo. We arrived that night at the Rio Negro. It was vain to seek for any similarity between this river and the prototype of all the Rio Negros, the great northern tributary of the Amazon, with its mirror-black waters, calm and glossy, its innumerable islands and maze of intricate channels. This Rio Negro was neither a river nor yet was it black. It was a rapid-flowing stream about 10 yards in width, tearing down under a low wooden bridge, swollen with rain but not interrupted with rocks. The waters were of a whitish colour, cold and refreshing. We slept on the bridge, which, as often in these parts, was provided with a thatched roof, and thus served as a *tambo* or wayside halt. The fireflies were flashing across the water. The bats came out of innumerable hiding-places and

flitted eerily around. The evening was closing in with rain and heavy clouds. Darkness seemed to roll over us like a penetrating and impenetrable medium. The early hours of the night were vocal with reverberant thunder and vivid with iridescent displays of tropical lightning.

The next morning was damp and melancholy, clouds of mist hanging over the little stream and seeping through the forest. The animals, tormented by the bats, had wandered away, and it was 11 a.m. before we could make a start. The path lay consistently through the forest—a dark forest relieved only by the blue morphos which flitted to and fro like living handfuls of the azure heavens, snatched by some compassionate angel for the brightening of the gloom. Tree-ferns were numerous and large. About four hours of the journey were consumed in the ascent of the Ventana. This climb has to be negotiated on foot, and it was a scramble over and through pools of mud. Generations of mule-trains had worn down the track till it was confined between two walls running in a deep ditch depressed by 10 feet or more below the normal surface of the ground. To pass in this ditch was an impossibility, and to turn an animal round would have demanded patience. The *arrieros* therefore advanced maintaining a series of shouts, so that anyone coming in the opposite direction might be sufficiently warned to wait where there was ampler accommodation. The animals scraped against the limiting walls of the track, tearing the saddle-bags, bumping the cargo, and squeezing themselves round the acute and hairpin corners. At intervals we came out on spots from which we were able to get an idea of the country we were leaving behind. Through the mist and cloud glimpses could be caught of the familiar

forest and the tumultuous confusion of the lower hills. We were the prisoners of the path and our journey was our unexpected gaol. The escape came when after a long ascent under these conditions we followed along a ridge and then descended into a slight valley. Here we found another night's resting-place in the scattered hamlets of Pucatambo, a little village in a vale far from the sea, set in security amid the age-long mountains, refreshed for ever by the music of the streams.

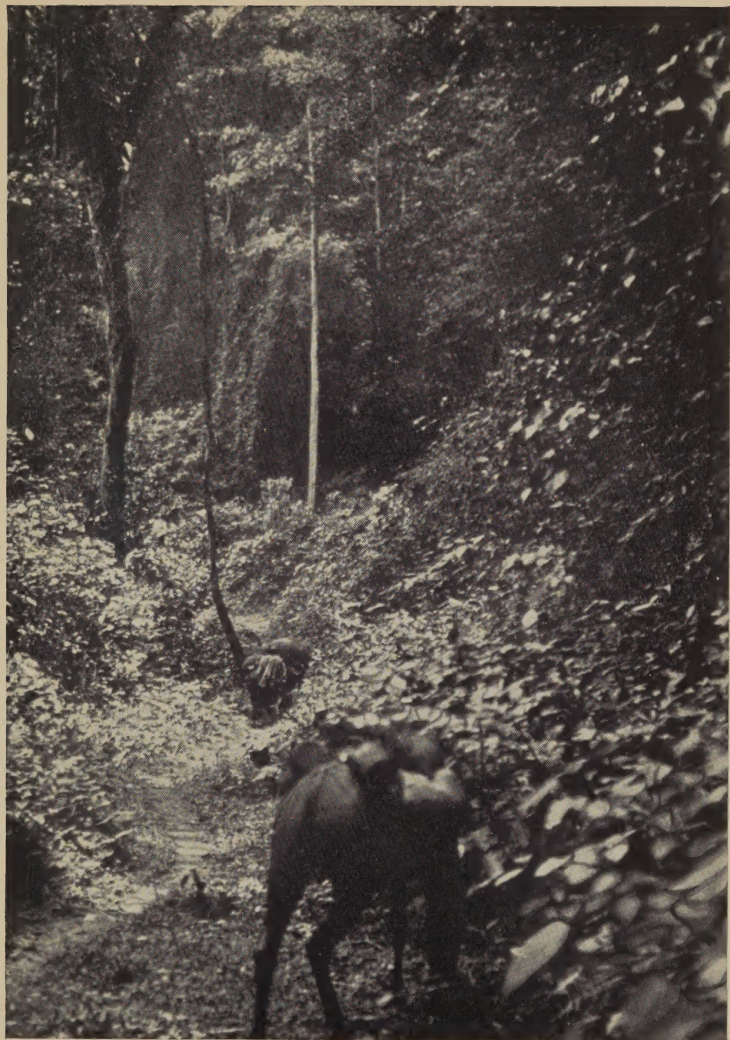
The next day was Carnival Sunday, and Pucatambo was officially drunk. In spite of this we pushed on a short distance to Ushcu, where the downpour made it advisable to call a further halt. It was still raining on the following morning, but shortly after day-break we resumed the journey. The path led through the forest, a forest sorrow-laden with the myriad tears of winter. A curious phenomenon could be noted over a distance of several miles. At the bottom of the *quebrada* which we were ascending was the stony channel of a stream. In spite of the world of wet about us the bed of this stream was entirely dry. The apparent explanation was to be sought farther up the valley, where the waters disappeared underground, seemingly not to appear again under their own name, so to speak. As we worked our way into the mountains the vegetation gradually became more broken and thin. Over some stretches it seemed to consist exclusively of tree-ferns and a variety of bamboo similar to that seen in lowland Amazonia. This combination bore a peculiar and distinctive appearance. The final exit lay through a pass between opposite hills. The cliffs looked down in proud disdain. All the elements of grandeur and untamed aloofness were present which could rightly be expected at the entry of a pass to the great

fluvial plains. The scene seemed to call for the defile of the Ten Thousand rather than the prosaic passage of a bedraggled traveller. I thought with a tinge of sadness that once more I was to leave this familiar and imprisoning environment for horizons of wider scope and cities of more fortunate setting. Meanwhile the *arriero* was urging the animals through the mud and demanding of all and sundry if ever before such crass obstinacy and deliberate sloth had been placed upon four legs and caused to function on the wide world's highways and byways.

The valley turned towards the south and we followed in that direction. The hill-sides were open and covered with a low bracken and coarse plants. The wild flowers made a sweet display of surpassing loveliness, as though to welcome the stranger, on the sterner passes of the mountains. A beautiful triangular specimen was prominent, with a stem about a foot long; a vivid large red daisy was nodding in hundreds; a bluebell of the same colour, if the contradiction be permitted, peeped out quietly at intervals. Yellows were there beyond the possibility of a census. There were a number of varieties I could not recall as having seen before, shy and dainty lovers of the wilds. The mosses were like the cushions of a palace, luxurious and sumptuous, lazy and inviting. I could imagine no more glorious paradise for the lover of flowers with the wanderlust in his blood. At 5 p.m. we reached Bagasan. Mortal man did not live in this alluring place. The valley running north and south was here joined by one from the west. The hills stood back in gentle tolerance. On the grassy sides of the rising slopes were bizarre and forbidding pinnacles of rock. The floor of the depression was a small but verdant vale, traversed by a winding stream whose waters were

as black and chilly as the grave. In the centre of this valley of seclusion were the ruins of a low, square *tambo* roughly put together from the rude and sleeping stones. The roof had long since fallen in, but the walls afforded some shelter from the night winds through the passes. The entourage recalled the border scenes of Scott, and I almost expected to find some crumbling castle, old in story. A few rough bushes grew near the stream and on the lower slopes. The soil was black and peaty, the pasture rich and inviting. The day had been consistently dull since we started out, but with the approach of evening's closing hour the open heaven began to reveal herself with reluctance, in the midst of an unusual interplay of sky and cloud. The unseen and setting sun was tinging with colour the retreating masses of cumulus, as though stirred by a battling repentance. With the vanquishment of the last vestiges of day the mists left the heavens as unstained and glorious as over rainless and unclouded deserts. It was new moon, and the astral host was without a rival. In the frigid mountain air the whole wealth of the celestial chambers was displayed with finished perfection. Above the forests of the north were the Pleiades, climbing in union an untiring path. The Twins were there, content to be lost in the presence of the southern stars. The blaze of Orion filled the zenith, every separate diamond penetrating and precious. The soft brilliance of Sirius dominated the great Triangle of the skies. In the wastes of the south the rival lights of Argo, innumerable and piercing, looked down upon the enchanting and distant spot.

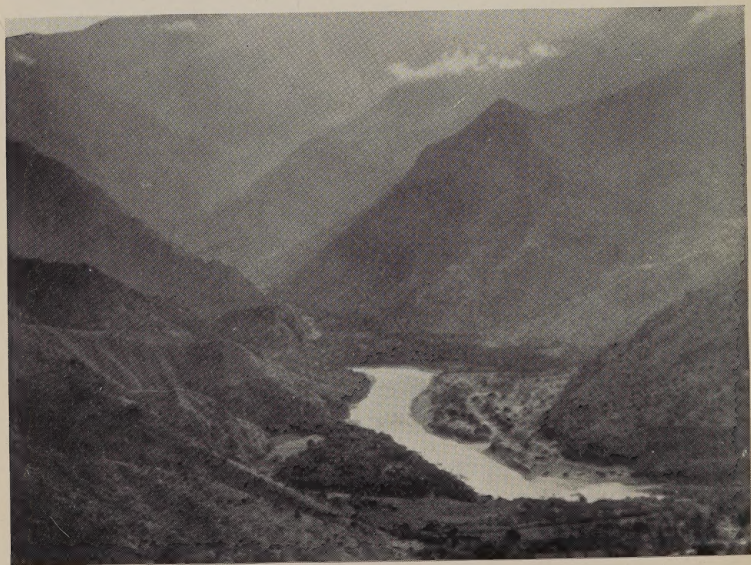
The *pièce de résistance* in the next day's journey was the crossing of the Piscaguanuna or summit of the watershed between the affluents of the Huallaga



THE BRIDLE-PATH NEAR MOYOBAMBA



THE ANDES FROM THE AMAZON



THE MARAÑON AT BALSAS

and those of the Marañon. These divides are known here as *jalcas*. The approach to the mountain mass was up a *quebradita* or bed of a stream. The bridle-paths of South America follow, as a rule, the topography of the country, but in their details they could be greatly improved. They cling to the Roman ideal of making as straight a line as possible, and they therefore negotiate next to impossible gradients and traverse most unstable and dangerous surfaces. They have proved almost useless for widening into motor-roads, but apparently these conditions matter little if at the same time a race of mules can be reared sufficiently responsive to external stimuli. It is impossible to help admiring the *arrieros* who wander over these rough-made tracks. Within the sphere of their limitations they are true gentlemen, and while, of course, there are plenty of thieves among them, as a rule they are hard-working, courteous, and obliging. This is especially the case when with ladies, who can generally travel alone in perfect safety. The vocabulary from which they compose the homilies wherewith they gently and meekly exhort their train of mules is rich in those expletives which form the rugged picturesqueness and peculiar glory of the Spanish language as used in these parts. They have an uncanny knack of making your animal plunge joyfully into the unknown leagues ahead by a single word of admonition after all belabouring is in vain, and when you are concluding that it would be cruel to spend your strength for nought. Though often compelled by their patrons to work with unfit beasts, they are careful with them, washing their sores night and morning and changing loads round from day to day. The *arriero's* only joy and inseparable companion is his poncho. When it is cold it warms him, when it rains it serves to

protect him. At night he rolls himself up in it and sleeps contentedly. He will place it under the saddle to protect the animal's back, or use it to cover its head when he is adjusting cargoes. All miscellaneous articles, from bananas to small boys, he will carry in it on his back. His duties with passengers are to saddle, unsaddle, and pasture their animals; to take them on their way safely, to cook for them, and to receive a tip. The passenger need bring food for himself only and his own cooking-pot. But I always pool my food and eat with the *arrieros*, as I like to hear the secrets of the road. Men in general in these regions, and especially Indians, who are otherwise silent and reserved, often grow indiscreet and communicative on a journey. The *arriero* rarely or never rides himself, even if there is an animal to spare.

The *jalca* itself was not a single ridge but a bulking summit, over the top of which we followed for some distance. If there was a view, we saw it not. Rolling clouds of mist were sweeping over the hills, drenching us in violent precipitations of rain, driven on by the piercing and relentless wind. On the top we met a long train of mules lurching down to Moyobamba with the mail and some miscellaneous cargo. After the warmth of the lowland forests, the biting cold seemed to penetrate to my very bones. We held on our way, sometimes mounted, sometimes walking, sometimes hauling the animals by the bridle over great boulders lying in the path or across mounds of loose and sharp-edged debris. Sometimes I could see the animals ahead, sometimes we plunged into grey banks of cloud, from which fleecy masses would detach themselves and race over the hills. Much of the lower slopes was covered with heath. Moorland flowers and marsh plants grew along the path. Little streams and reed-edged ponds marked the

sources and resources of the world's immensest river. Higher up we passed into the régime of the rocks, where one stone challenged another to baptize the summits with sterility. On the far side we descended into the valley, where the rain had ceased. Marshes and ponds had formed, where the cattle were meditatively analysing the profounder problems of life—food, drink, sleep, and £ s. d. It was a scene of rural peace, unspeakably calm after the turmoil and confusion of the forest. We arrived that night at Molinapampa, about 7,200 feet above the sea, and the next day's journey brought us to Chachapoyas.

In Chachapoyas I repaired to the house of one Don Pedro Quiroz, to whom belonged nearly all the horseflesh and most of the human ditto of the place, who contracted for the transport of mail, saints, musical instruments, baths, of families complete with children, of all other miscellaneous cargo, living or dead, and who had as big a reputation for relieving people of superfluous shekels as the Commissioner for Inland Revenue himself. In the patio or yard were divers mules of varying degrees of obesity and laziness, piles of *alfalfa* or fodder, and the customary accoutrements of a stable. The remaining ornaments chiefly consisted of the usual gentry one does meet about yards the world over, permanently, systematically, and laboriously engaged in doing nothing in particular except planning how to pass a few more hours in the same delectable occupation. These gentry, when addressed, indicated to me the person of a lady who was said to possess information as to the whereabouts of Don Pedro. Having identified the lady, buried among folds of corpulence and seated on a bench in a side-room drinking *aguardiente* with a gentleman possessed of a face resembling a poached egg in colour and

design, I approached her, only to find, as I anticipated, both of them incoherently intoxicated. The miscellaneous personages of the yard had by now summoned their perambulatory properties, invested them unreservedly in their lower extremities, thus assisted, crossed the *patio* and fired off the usual questions at me: whether I was one of these 'ingleses' who constitute a 'barbarity for travelling', or alternatively, a 'norte-americano', or possibly a German, of the new company, or of the proposed railway, or merely an unofficial and unescorted nincompoop. They then told me what I wanted to know, namely, that it was seven days' journey to Cajamarca at the head of the motor-road. As I wished to accelerate my journey somewhat over this stage, I duly announced my intention of doing it in five or six at the most. At which announcement the whole assembly immediately fell figuratively upon its face, twanged its vocal cords, swelled its organs, pulled out its stops, and replied in unison and of one accord that such a thing was impossible, the reason being what the reason always is on these occasions, that no one ever did it. Having thus relieved their consciences on my behalf, they dispersed, being seized with apprehension at the possibility of being discovered doing anything else besides nothing for more than twenty minutes at a time.

Chachapoyas is the capital of the department of Amazonas, which is tucked in between the departments of San Martin and Cajamarca. It was conquered by the Incas and the region annexed to the empire of Tupac Yupanqui, who also subdued the Indians of Ecuador and occupied their territory. The difficult nature of the country and the fierce barbarism of the savages prevented the Inca from

extending his conquests much to the north of Chachapoyas. To-day Quichua is little used in and around the town. It is a place of about 10,000 people, isolated and central, hidden among the hills, surrounded by wooded ridges and open country, revealing many coloured soils. There is practically no commerce, but a bishop resides there, and there are numerous churches. Nearly all these latter edifices came to the ground in the earthquake of May 14, 1928. The tower of one alone remains. The houses, being built of adobes, suffered to a considerable extent, and many people were still living in wretched patchwork tents pitched in the plaza of the city. Funds voted by the Government and subscribed by individuals to assist the people after the disaster were largely appropriated for the rebuilding of the churches.

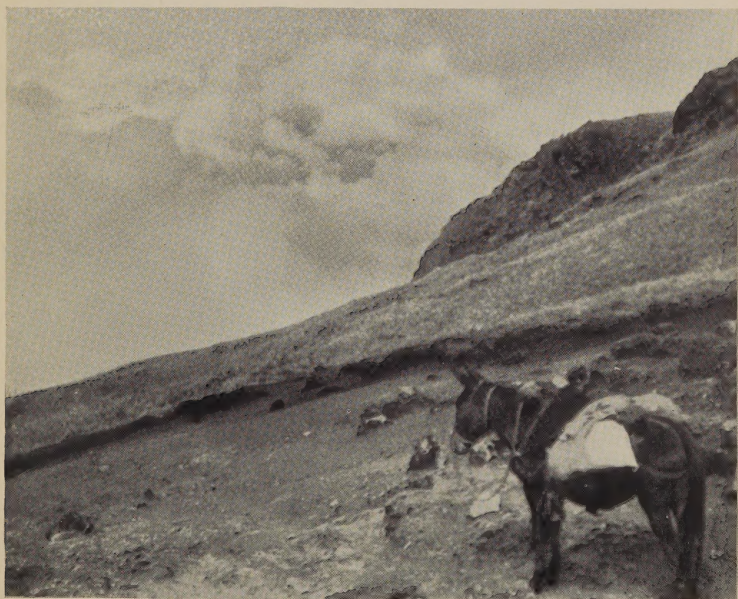
On February 15th I was introduced to a small, black, fat-and-round-in-the-belly and contented-looking female mule which had been instructed to convey me and adjuncts to Cajamarca. The *arriero* was a middle-aged man, given to taking excess of *chicha* when he could get it, but otherwise satisfactory. He had one great merit—he was addicted to early rising. The mule proved to be a good goer and sticker when sufficiently and adequately stimulated. It had, however, a habit of suddenly standing stock-still in the path as though threatened with incipient angina. As the *arriero* put it, 'This mule has a great taste for pondering', which seemed rather a charitable rendering of the situation. Deeply as I yearned, however, for the intellectual advancement of the equine race, and earnestly as I sympathized with emancipatory feminist movements in the ranks of mulism, these meditations or ponderations were hardly in accord with the object

for which the mule had been freighted. Indeed, the *arriero* recognized this truth in these remarkable words: 'It is absolutely necessary to extract all the laziness from the mule', and presumably to park it by the wayside for the benefit of succeeding travellers. The partial attainment of this ideal enabled me to reach Chilla, which consisted of two houses on the slopes of the valley of the Utcubamba, by the first evening. On the opposite heights there remains to this day the little-known Inca fortress of Cuelap.

On the 17th we left Leimebamba for one of the most remarkable and memorable stages of the trip. We started out at 4.30 a.m., picking our way up the path in the total darkness by the flickering light of a candle. The moon had long since gone to rest, and the stars were hidden by impenetrable veils of cloud. We passed out of the valley and began working our way up to the *jalca* or summit of the hills which enclose the valley of the Marañon. This pass is known as the Calla Calla, and is one of the most famous and dreaded in the whole region for clouds, rain, rocks, stones, mud, cold, wind, and general discomfort. It rises to about 13,000 feet. Rain had fallen heavily overnight and the path was in a disreputable state, ponded with water and foul with inevitable slime. The dawn was indefinable and gradual, and found us on the mountain-side enveloped in pervasive clouds. Presently these lifted somewhat, and on rounding a spur in the little *quebrada* we were faced with a rare and entrancing phenomenon. The towering bluff of mountain at the head of the *quebrada* seemed to be aglow with heat, as though consumed by internal flames. The fiery rays from the rising sun were pouring over the dome of clouds which enclosed us and catching



ON THE PLATEAU NEAR CAJAMARCA



THE SUMMIT OF CALLA CALLA



GUAYAQUIL



THE ANDES NEAR QUITO

the higher altitudes. The phenomenon soon disappeared and left us in the drab reality of a damp-stricken and weeping morning. The *quebrada* led up to a concealed valley, where the moorland country rested on a floor of green and resilient turf. Marsh and sedge were surrounding pools of murky water, girt about by the mountains with their sentinel and sleepless rocks. We passed out of this valley, pushing up always towards the summit. As we ascended we left the clouds below and entered a zone where the morning sun was shining with indescribable freshness. The little streams danced and sparkled in the welcome light. A cool breeze was blowing from the springs of the dawn, piercing, steady, and keen. You could not but be young in such a spot. The country was what is known as *puna*, a rock-strewn moorland where there is no suitable pasture for animals. Not so much as a goat was nosing round the boulders. Among the summits solitude cries in vain for company, nor was there a condor to look menacingly down upon our intrusion.

The apex of the divide was a perfectly well-defined ridge. The decisive step revealed such a remarkable panorama—if that word can be applied—that a fertile imagination would hardly have suggested it. Stretching away down from under our feet were the immense slopes of the valley of the Marañon. But the famous river, running in the incomparable valley of its own creation, here nearly 10,000 feet deep, was totally hidden from our eyes. The mighty gorge itself was filled with mountains of another order, great bulwarks of white clouds, unspotted in purity, rolling masses of fantastic peaks, the cirques and glaciers of the imagery of the mind. You seemed in the pure mountain air, however delusively, to be face to face with the first mystery

of things escaping analysis, the awakening of primeval and eternal causes, the struggle of creative conflicts, 'the stir of the forces whence issued the world'. Only through a formless rent in the intangible veil was it possible to catch a glimpse, not of the cheering blue of heaven, but of the indistinct sides of the opposite hills. As we descended, the legions of mist and damp were still unfolding their banners over the infant river. They rose in advancing hosts, in unimpelled surges of motion, to meet and engulf us. They seethed up the cliffs and vales, blotting out the range of visibility, filling the air with an elusive steam. After lunch we turned round a spur, and through a thin rain we caught a glimpse of the Marañon. It seemed like the immurement of insignificance. It was impossible not to wonder at such a conformation of Nature's immensest and immeasurable monuments to allow the insistence of a scarce appraisable stream.

It was evening before we reached the river. The path had taken us down into the valley by a *quebrada* where the bottle-trunk-tree and cactus were growing in profusion, and where the barren rocks and soil alike were parched for water. At the bottom of this *quebrada* we came out on to the Marañon. The water was white and chalky, and the river flowing swiftly, lapping on a beach of clean sand on the near bank, swirling round the base of an angry promontory of red and ragged rock on the far one. We passed through the village of Balsas and crossed the river by a suspension bridge between two cliffs. We slept in a house on the left bank, belonging to a small group of such dwelling-places known as Shucumayo. The night was as warm as in Yurimaguas. The next day we climbed out of the valley again and reached Huacapampa, from where

Cajamarca was a long day's journey over the mountains. The town possesses some 15,000 inhabitants, and the proportion of Indians is here greater, characteristic costumes being common. It was in this place that Atahualpa, the last reigning Inca, had his celebrated and fatal rencontre with Francisco Pizarro, into whose hands he was betrayed by the priest Valverde. Cajamarca to-day is a dirty and somewhat uninteresting town, boasting, however, an unfinished and ambitious cathedral. But it has been placed of recent years within convenient communication with the coast by means of a motor-road, which connects it with the railway to Pacasmayo.

CHAPTER XVI

GUAYAQUIL AND QUITO

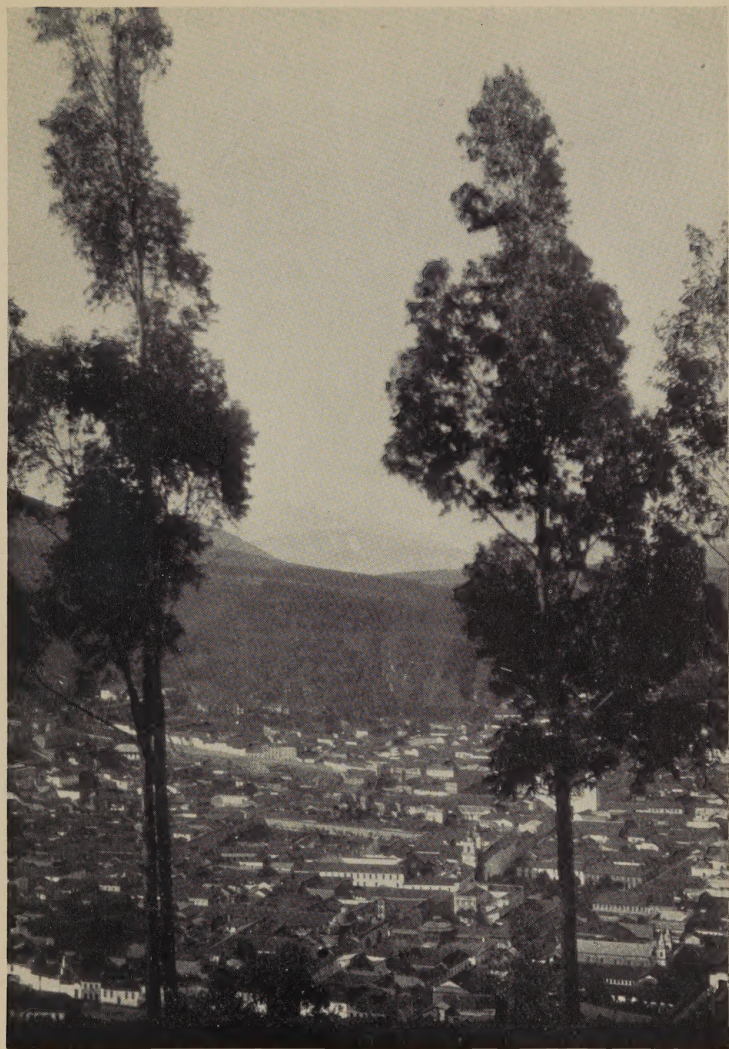
GUAYAQUIL is the only gate of Ecuador. The scare of yellow fever has now disappeared from the port owing to the efficient labours of the Rockefeller Health Foundation. Sanitation work is still in progress and in the back streets of this town of 100,000 people are great pools of stagnant water, covered with green sedge, while lines of stepping-stones provide a possibility of crossing in safety over veritable sloughs of fœtid mud. But the main avenues are paved and some have a very pleasing aspect. The climatic and general conditions are entirely different to those of the barren, arid coast of Peru. The approach up the river Guayas is not dissimilar to the mouth of the Amazon. For several hours the steamer pushes up the estuary. A thin vegetation lines the banks. Behind lies an alternation of swamp, forest, and plain. The banks are low, although the river was in flood at the time of my visit. A few big *haciendas* or farms can be seen. But the general impression corresponds exactly to the usual mental picture of the 'mangrove swamps of Darien', and so forth. The river at Guayaquil is about two miles wide. The only landing is by boat, and the whole river-front is utilized by fleets of launches and sailing-boats, as at Pará. The rainfall is heavy, but the average temperature is very slightly less than that obtaining over most of the Amazon valley.

Quito, the capital, stands between two ranges of the Andes, and the direct journey from Guayaquil occupies two days by train or one by train and one by motor-car. The journey is necessarily broken at Riobamba, which was my immediate destination. For the first 50 miles the railway ran across perfectly flat and marshy land. The track was as straight as a horizontal plumb-line. The rains had been heavy and floods were out in all directions. The houses were built on high piles, roofed with grass, walled and floored with bamboos beaten flat. Cacao was the principal tree or plant growing, and in point of fact, in spite of depressing years recently, forms the economic mainstay of the country. The little villages were either under water or engulfed in seas of mud. After crossing this coastal strip we commenced to climb into the sierra. The line followed the ravine of a small stream. Palms continued to appear up to about 4,000 feet. There were no tree-ferns, and few trees of considerable size. The forest had an aspect very dissimilar to the transition forest of the Amazon slopes. We soon passed through this zone and the hills were covered with a green and evidently well-watered grass.

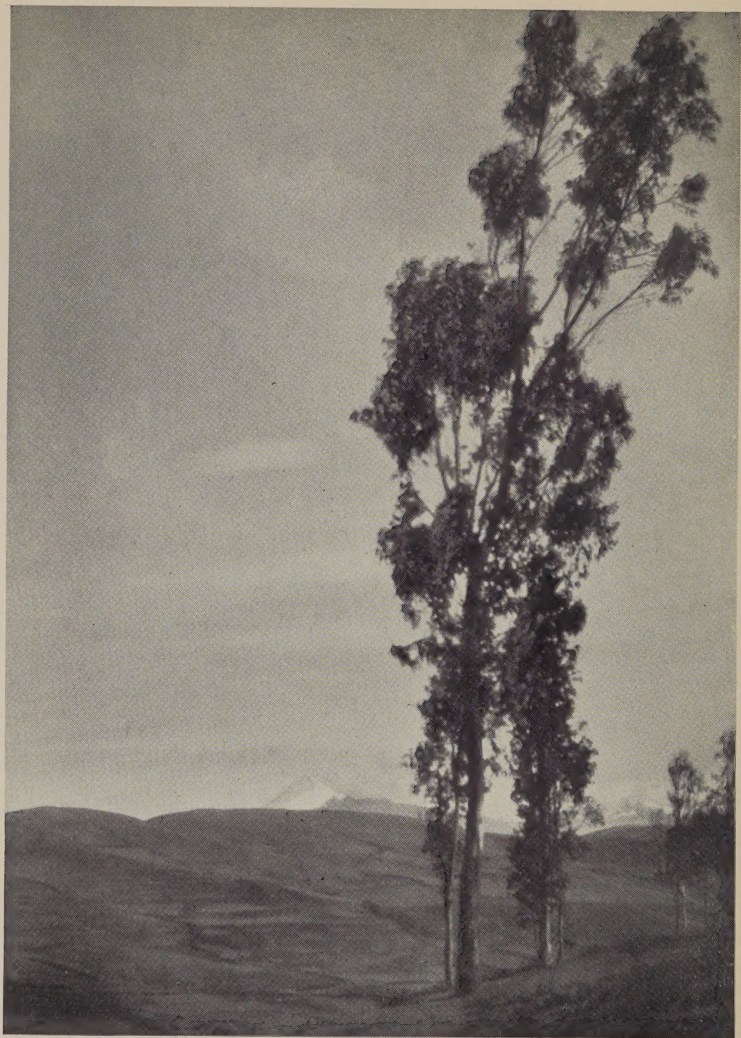
At Huigra the Quichua Indians began to be in evidence. They were dressed typically with their hats and ponchos. A few individuals had a somewhat different appearance from the rest, and a group of men were walking round, bearded and clad in a species of tunic. These local differences are common in Ecuador and are accounted for by the late absorption into the Inca Empire of tribes of varying customs. The correct use of a table could also be noted at Huigra. The women put up their tables by the railway and sell lunches to such passengers whose class or resources prohibit the

hotel, or whose curiosity emboldens them to break the digestive ice. When business is completed you turn the table upside down, having first of all placed its appointments on the ground, and then put all the plates, spare lunches, baskets of fragments or any other assortments on the bottom side. Having assembled the utensils of the trade you lift up the table, deposit it on the head, and decamp, being thus temporarily possessed of six legs, of which the major portion crown rather than carry the rest of your anatomy.

The train was split up into three sections for the negotiation of the steeper part of the sierra, each engine hauling three coaches. There were no signals, and the sections followed each other up the gradients just as close or as far apart as they liked. From the back of the middle portion it was possible to keep tab on the relative position of the other two, the curves frequently bringing both into sight at once. On stopping round a bend to pick up water or passengers or anything of that nature, safety depended on the activities of a bleary individual who sat on the back platform. His duty was to drop off as if he had been hanged, stand as near to the outside of the curve as he could without falling over the precipice, and gesticulate wildly with his arms like a point-duty expert. On the front of the other engine sat two buffers (human) with their legs dangling over, but apparently not an official part of the show. We continued up the valley by a series of curves and loops, so that anyone who was a good shot with a bad egg could have dropped it down the funnel of the train immediately below him. Finally we zigzagged up the side of the ravine, to and fro, reversing at the end of each stage. When we reached the summit of the climb, at about



QUITO



LOOKING TOWARDS COTOPAXI

11,000 feet, we were in the inter-andean depression. Here the mountain-sides were of the *puna* type, grey and desolate. We stopped amid scenes of terrific and unrestrained confusion, in the midst of which the various sections of the train chased each other round sidings with hilarious energy. Engineers blew their whistles, and sidings-men, platelayers, and all and sundry waved extremities and flags with such persistence that I was not certain whether to rise to my feet and shout 'Viva el Ecuador!' or hang up my harp upon the rack and weep. Happily the contest was settled peaceably, and soon we were running rapidly over the plateau down to Riobamba.

Riobamba is a pleasant town of some 20,000 people. It is clean and neat, with some good modern buildings and compact, well-kept plazas and parks. The sierra towns of Ecuador compare favourably with those in Peru and Bolivia. The Indians were coming in and out, and they had their big market in a large open square. They wore small ponchos of variegated colours and wide, baggy trousers which came down to half-way between the knees and ankles. The women's hair was woven in a pig-tail, which was wrapped round and round with a decorated band of cloth like a misplaced puttee. They carried enormous burdens, crowned not infrequently by babies. One woman was driving a donkey into market weighed down with a portentous load of *alfalfa*. On her back she was bearing another terrific bundle, from beneath which a pair of legs could just be seen protruding. The donkey's little foal was trotting innocently along behind, busily consuming the *alfalfa* off her back, all untroubled. It suggested a new model for arithmetic primers, thus; Mrs. Robinson starts for Timbuctoo market

with 100 lb. of *alfalfa* on her back, followed by a donkey who eats 2·5 lb. half-hourly. If when she arrives she has only 27 lb. to sell, where did she come from? Enormous quotas of *alfalfa* seemed to trot merrily round Riobamba on their private pegs till the place strongly resembled Dunsinane.

The Jesuit church in the town is unusual. It is modern and built under a big dome in the Italian style. This is comparatively rare in South America. In another of the churches is this inscription: 'In the Noble Town of Villar don Pardo, on December 8, 1616. After the *fiesta* all the faithful, clergy, leaders and people, nobles and populace, who live and dwell in this said town, swear, promise, and bind themselves by God Almighty from henceforth for evermore, to defend in peace or in war the Most Holy Conception of the Sovereign Virgin, as having been without original sin, and in the defence of this they will risk and expose their persons, property, lives, and souls in life and in death.' In the centre is a crude picture of the Virgin Mary and the words, 'Thou art all pure, my dove, and there is no spot in Thee'; with the title, 'The Most Pure of Macas—1616—the Stone of the Oath'. Underneath is the legend, 'No one may pass this portal who will not swear by his life that Mary conceived without original sin.' The Macas of to-day is a village several days' journey from Riobamba. An image was brought from Spain, transformed, and illuminated miraculously before all the people of the place on December 23, 1592. As the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was only proclaimed as a dogma in 1854, these events serve to prove the inspiration and piety of the people of the neighbourhood.

From Riobamba to Ambato was a few hours' journey by road. The route follows close along the

base of Chimborazo, one of the greatest volcanoes, though now extinct, in the world. It is 20,500 feet in height, or higher than Vesuvius by more than the altitude of Mont Blanc. As a vision of the rarer vagaries of nature, and as a testimony to the stupendous unseen forces which have been set in motion to form this earth, it is a sublime and ever-memorable sight. At that season the angry and impenitent clouds were generally concealing the mountain to below the snow-line. At intervals the summits would appear faint and sad through the rain, stately withal and struggling for freer expression. The definiteness and regularity of the limit of snows is impressive. Clefts and rifts furrowed the surface till they were lost in the blankets of vapour. On another occasion the clouds parted and revealed the morning sun lighting up the whole snow-white altitudes. It is a surpassingly magnificent peak, and it always seems that if it were active the whole world would be shaken from shore to shore. Ambato proved to be a town of about 20,000 people, greatly frequented by Indians, and from here it was easy to find a car going to Quito. Among my fellow-passengers I met a gentleman who considered himself obliged to expound to me his views on the activity of Cotopaxi. In the first place he could prove that the volcano connected subterraneously with the Pacific, as he had frequently seen whirlpools and evidences of suction on a calm day off a certain stretch of the coast. It would not have been surprising to hear that he had also found blocks of salt on the slopes of the mountain, or had detected sharks and small boats vomited out in some of the more violent eruptions. This conversation carried us on to Latacunga, about the same size as Ambato. The Indians were finding their way into the town for the market

from all quarters. Hundreds and hundreds of them were on the road, which was alive with trafficking humanity. Every donkey was creaking under a colossal burden, every man, woman, and eligible child carried some negotiable mystery in a blanket on the back. The cargo was of every imaginable category. One woman had five enormous clay jars with an infant fitted in among them. Babies, bags, beans, boxes, bananas, fowl, turkeys, ponchos, rags, food, drink, and commodities of uncounted variety for internal or external consumption or no consumption at all were there. *Alfalfa* and asses obstinately stood in the middle of the road and neighed while the Indians shouted and pushed and jostled one another into the gutter. Coloured ponchos, wide hats, and short cotton trousers, voluminous in the matter of breadth, formed the usual garb. On a subsequent occasion I drove down this road at night and in the heavy rain. The Indians were then returning from the market. They were nearly all hopelessly drunk, the men more so than the women. In spite of the utmost caution some of them had narrow shaves, rushing out in front of the car, while their wives struggled to pull them back. Others were lurching to and fro in the familiar style while their animals wandered about at random. A number were lying like logs in the middle of the highway.

Quito, the capital of Ecuador, is a town of 100,000 inhabitants, and has an altitude of some 9,000 feet. It is only a few miles south of the Equator, but the climate is equable and apparently healthy. The streets are narrow and there is a good deal of hilly ground, but not so much as in the Bolivian capital, La Paz. The place was established by the Caras, who were conquered by the Incas of Peru. Huayna Capac, the great Inca soldier and ruler and the



THE JESUIT CHURCH, QUITO



THE SLOPES OF PICHINCHA

father of Atahualpa, fixed his residence for many years and died here, weighed down, it is said, by the profound depression that the news of the arrival of the Spaniards caused him. The Jesuit and Franciscan churches are notable for their architecture, but the cathedral has but little to recommend it. The government of the country is essentially liberal in questions of religion, and the devout among the people number a large body. One Sunday afternoon I entered the Franciscan edifice. It was luxurious with gilt and images and all the display of magnificence seen in the more important Roman Catholic churches, very different from the simple spirit of the saint of Assisi. The service was in progress and the nave was fairly filled with about six hundred in attendance. The altar was lavishly illuminated by the light of 167 electric bulbs. All classes were represented, from the Indian with his poncho to the best families of Castilian stock. Men were in a fair proportion. Presently a friar entered the pulpit to preach. He wore no robes beyond his Franciscan habit. He was evidently a fine natural orator and the people hung upon his words. His exceptional delivery and deep, sonorous voice allowed him to be heard among the farthest pillars of the aisles.

While in the city I walked out to the little hill of Panecilla. The summit was exceedingly pleasant, being covered with fresh grass and dotted with the graceful eucalyptus. The view around seemed to combine the essential features of Ecuador in one panorama. To the south spread away the plateau-valley of the richest green, a fit setting for a pastoral legend of old. The groves of eucalyptus were already dark with the dignity of age, although the youngest of the trees. The valley was bounded by three low, naked peaks, whose utmost efforts failed of the

baptism of snow. Some twelve volcanoes were visible all around the horizon, although the clouds were hanging low. Farther to the east was the point which immediately caught and held the eye. The incomparable snow-peak of Cotopaxi stood free above the lesser heights, white, immaculate, and sublime. This celebrated volcano exhibits a perfect crater, and for symmetry of form it has been compared with Fujiyama, which it exceeds in altitude by 7,000 feet. A history of terror and disaster has been associated with it. It is recorded as one of the most active volcanoes in the world, and its altitude of 19,600 feet makes it the highest. It was far-lifted from the tumult of the lesser peaks. It seemed to overtop them by as much as they towered above the valleys beneath. It was communing alone with the heaven-voyaging mists. One side was smooth but wind-furrowed, the other broken apparently with tumbling masses of snow. These details were distinguishable with ease in the clear air of the Andes, although the volcano was 31 miles distant. The actual configuration must therefore have been upon a cyclopean scale. Cotopaxi looked, in the pale evening light, like a king indisputable in his own right, crowned but not with hands. In the west the sun was already beginning to sink behind the ridges of Pichincha. No definite and well-formed craters were visible from where I stood. The lower slopes, rising from my very feet, were covered with the same friendly eucalyptus. Above this was a stretch of rough forest extending to the border of the *puna*. Jagged peaks and broken lines of rock marked the highest altitudes. A single beautiful waterfall was tumbling down the sides. In the shadow of the volcano Quito was standing, a city of brown-red tiles and plaster walls. The streets were running in

parallel lines, straight and narrow. Prominent among the many larger buildings were the Franciscan and Dominican churches and the cathedral. The city was on a ledge forming the first stage in the ascent of Pichincha. The ledge fell steeply into a valley reaching away into the distance. Trees and farms and detail were lost in the whole glorious sweep. More than any other region perhaps, between Bolivia and the Equator, the country around Quito merits the title of the 'Pearl of the Andes'. A line of volcanoes was closing in the horizon, but the clouds of sunset were struggling, with success alas! to imprison their beauties. The evening light was fresh and golden, lighting up the patchwork of fields and the furrowed mountain-side, leaving an indefinable impression of breadth and freedom.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAKE OF BLOOD

TO the north of the capital the Quito-Esmeraldas railway is under construction. It is a Government concern, and intended eventually to link the capital with the northern coast. In 1929 the section as far as Otavalo was open. We were supposed to leave at 7.30 a.m. and arrive at 3.30 p.m. Actually we left at the appointed hour and arrived at 8 p.m. As the distance was 89 miles, we thus accomplished the phenomenal speed of $7\frac{1}{4}$ miles an hour. The runners of the Incas were said to be able to maintain this speed over the stages into which their routes were divided. It is true that we were delayed about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours owing to a fall of earth on the line, but on the return journey, with a clear line throughout the distance, we took the same time, less a quarter of an hour. Again, it should not be thought that there are any towns of great importance, exceeding, say, 250,000 population, or junctions of immense traffic routes, on the way to Otavalo. On the other hand, there are only two villages with about a thousand souls in each, and a number of isolated houses and farms. Doubtless these conditions will be remedied in the future, and the mere undertaking of the enterprise through difficult and broken country reflects considerable credit on the government of the nation. Previous to the opening of the railway, the journey could be made with greater expedition by motor-car, but

since the happy event the road has been closed by merely neglecting to have the landslides removed from such parts of it as did not coincide with the track of the line. Before we were well out of the station we were delayed by a totally unauthorized gentleman who had pushed an empty truck out of a siding on to the main line and was proceeding to load his cattle into it. When he had completed this operation he was kind enough to allow us to advance, and we continued without novelty to kilometre 16, where half a cliff, including an enormous rock, was lying over the line. A gang of Indians was working at the obstruction. The heavy rain of the night had been responsible for the damage. The more sapient and experienced passengers dismounted and inspected the place, patronizingly telling the foreman how to do his job. Several people thought that it was the Government's fault that the cliff grew in that particular locality at all, while others were convinced that, if they had been present, the thing certainly wouldn't have fallen. Finally, some bright individual suggested that we should return to Quito for lunch. But the scrawny-faced mercenary who corresponded to the guard replied that he could not do such a thing without telegraphing to the manager for permission, and that was impossible, as there was no telegraph. He did not seem to relish the idea that he should return with the train to get permission to return again and then return with us for lunch, or alternatively that he should merely return with a selection of lunches.

The scenery along this section of line was of those magnificent sweeps of land common to the Andean plateaux and valleys. It was still early when we left Quito and the chill was in the air. This was intensified as we climbed out of the city up a saddle between

the hills. The peaks of Pichincha were stern and clear, rocky and distinct. Once over the summit the true inter-andean valley was mapped out before us. The train followed along the edge of a ridge. Where we stopped for the clearing of the track the view was at its greatest expansion. The country was green and fertile, squared with fields like a giant chessboard of nature, dotted with clumps of eucalyptus, the playground of Pan, the joy of the shepherd and the planter. The sound of rushing water was in our ears, the music of the mountains, the harmony of the hills. On the far side of the valley was the eastern cordillera, where the Andes and the Amazon kissed hands in an everlasting adieu. In the midst of this range stood Antisana, whose base is in the forest and whose crater is circled with the snows. Further to the south-east was the scenic climax. There once again rose the matchless Cotopaxi, the embodiment of majesty, a monarch in his own right, white as a bride's dress, splendid and without a rival. The air was keen and sweet. But a line of curling clouds like a countless army, irresistible but slow, was invading from the damp of the lowland forests. Before we left, the whole cordillera was enveloped in cumulus.

The train in motion was a rare sight, and far more remarkable than the train at rest. It possessed no such refinements as vacuum brakes. Each car had a hand-brake operated by a wheel on the top of the roof. At the required moment the engine-driver gave a wink or wound up his watch, and a serf threw himself violently on the wheel. When the slope was steep, and the distance miscalculated, he seized a balk of timber and used it as a lever, bringing us up with a series of infernal crashes, creaks, and groans like a torture-chamber of the Inquisition. How many



OTAVALO INDIANS



BARGAINING AT OTAVALO



THE VOLCANO OF IMBABURA

persons were required to work the train it was difficult to calculate, but four were destined to the exclusive attention of the engine alone. We were constantly stopping, or perhaps constantly in motion. Sometimes we stopped in the middle of a climb to get up more steam; sometimes, apparently, to put it down again; sometimes to pick up workmen; sometimes to converse with a solitary horseman who had an acquaintance among the more influential passengers. The stoppages to effect repairs to the engine were the most interesting. These took place about every 7 miles. The engine-men would drop off their rocking-horse and crawl under her, armed to the teeth with spanners, hammers, pins, seccotine, string, and other implements of their trade—not omitting oaths and Indian boys. After they had, so to speak, put Humpty-Dumpty temporarily back on his wall, they would proceed in pride and peace for another stage. In addition, it might be well to add, we also stopped at the 'stations'.

The line took us down on to the inter-andean depression. This, when inspected at close quarters, was not the simple stretch of country it appeared to be at first sight. The soil was almost entirely of loose and stony earth. In this the mountain streams had cut profound *quebradas*. These were true cañons, their edges being level with the rest of the plain. So soft was the soil that insignificant streams had carved for themselves gorges out of all proportion to their importance. The line trailed round the top of these and consequently followed the higher ground and the lower slopes of the volcanoes. In the afternoon we passed close to the peak of Cayambe. From a distance the summit was clear and distinct. It was triple-pointed and crowned with glittering snow. Unfortunately, when we drew nearer it began

to conceal its beauties behind the clouds. We clanked laboriously over a ridge formed partly by the slopes of this volcano. From the apex of the ascent a beautiful and unexpected sight was in store. About a thousand feet below lay a calm and glistening sheet of water, one of the Andean lakes of Ecuador, the lake San Pablo or St. Paul's lake. It seemed from our position to be almost rectangular and about a mile and a half long. To the north lay the greater and lesser peaks of the volcano of Imbabura, enveloped in the mountain mist. Across the lake to the west the hills were ruled into successive strata by lines of motionless clouds. The beautiful volcano of Cotocachi was hidden from us. It was already dusk, and low over the hills shone the young moon, tenderly wooing into her arms a single bright and solitary star.

The train service did not reach beyond Otavalo, but a short distance farther north was the town of Ibarra. In all this region thousands of Indians were living. There were slight differences in their dress, according to the part they came from. Their distinguishing characteristic, however, is their extraordinary hats. These are manufactured of home-made felt and are about 2 feet to 3 feet in diameter. The brim curls upwards, making a sort of outer rampart to protect the crown. The intermediate moat the women fill with potatoes, beans, or any other commodity, when they go marketing. These Indians are slowly becoming more accustomed to the amenities or horrors of modern life, but they still flee from motors, climbing over the banks of the road, holding on to each other, or clinging to trees. Sometimes they will run as fast as they can in front of a car and at the last moment plunge into the bank. About an hour outside Ibarra was the

historically celebrated lake of Yaguarcocha—the Lake of Blood. This was the scene of the decisive conflict between the forces of the Inca Huayna Capac and the Caranques, who had rebelled against the authority of the Inca. As a result of this battle the Inca definitely consolidated his empire throughout the whole of Ecuador and the southern part of Colombia as far as Pasto. Cieza de Leon, the chronicler, states that 20,000 Indians are said to have been killed, so that the waters of the lake were red with blood. It was impossible to examine this statement, as there was no means to hand for measuring the depth of the lake so as to verify if the 20,000 could have provided sufficient blood for the purpose of dyeing on the large scale. But Garcilasso de la Vega calls in question the accuracy of the story. He says: 'A severe punishment was inflicted on all the Caranques. The Ynca ordered that they should all be drowned in a lake which is on the frontier between the land of the Caranques and that of the allied tribes. In order that the name of the lake might preserve the memory of the punishment and the crime, they called it Yahuar-cocha, which means the lake of blood. For the lake was covered with blood, from the quantity that was shed in it. Pedro de Cieza, briefly alluding to this event in his thirty-seventh chapter, says that 20,000 persons were put to death. He should have said that that was the number that fell, on both sides, in that war, which was long and obstinately fought.

'Having inflicted this punishment, the Ynca went to Quito, mourning very sorrowfully at such atrocious and unhuman crimes having been committed

¹ *Royal Commentaries of the Yncas by Ynca Garcilasso de la Vega.* Trans. Clements R. Markham. Hakluyt Society. Vol. ii. 1871. Pp. 448-50.

in his dominions, which should have required such severe and cruel chastisement so contrary to his natural disposition and to that of his ancestors, who were all inclined to clemency. He deplored the fate which made these insurrections fall out in his time, to make him miserable, and not in former days. . . . More carefully considered this rebellion was an omen and a warning of the approaching insurrection of greater importance which would lead to the fall of the empire, and the total destruction of the royal family, as we shall presently see.'

The lake lay to the north of Ibarra and somewhat above it. It was set among the hills like a giant bowl for the rocks to quench their thirst. It was about two square miles in area and was oval, the long axis lying north and south, while to the east there was a bend in the shore forming a small bay or pocket. Away to the north lay a great cañon or valley, the valley of the River Chota, belonging to one of the coastal systems. Beyond this the mountains rose gradually again till they were hidden in the clouds. The country was open and unobstructed, allowing far-reaching vistas in every direction. To the east and south smooth-topped hills came down to the shores of the water. To the west there was a ridge closing in the immediate view, and then an incomparable plain stretching away to the maritime cordillera. This is one of the beautiful regions of Ecuador. The country is verdant and refreshing to look upon. In all directions it was divided into fields and planted with copses and groups of trees. The mountains and clouds provided an unfailing interest, constantly similar, constantly varying, constantly unique. It is, indeed, among the fairest of the plateaux of the Andes. Farther to the north the surface becomes barer and more barren. The lake

was smooth and sunlit. Perhaps it looked very much the same four hundred years ago, when the decisive battle was fought, except for the groves of eucalyptus, which add so much attraction to these latitudes. Some small farms were dotting the margin. The water was dark and murky. The banks were strewn with flat blocks of bubbled lava. At the south end a little group of Indian houses was hidden among the trees. Cattle were grazing pensively, and horses and donkeys took their ease. Diminutive waves were lapping on the shore.

I resolved to walk round the edge, and set out to do so. I got on perfectly well till I got about half-way round. Here the path ceased, although the ground looked easily transitable, if somewhat marshy. I advanced cautiously, wishing there was someone else to go in front. Suddenly one foot broke through the surface crust and sank into the mud. It was followed by its pertinent leg as well as by the other one. An instinctive effort to get out only sent me farther in. The mud was now some distance above the knees, emitting cavernous and frothy bubbles. I noticed that I was sinking at about one inch per minute. The discovery of this latter truth convinced me that the situation was neither commendable nor safe for prolonged and undistracted meditation. At the same time previous experience reminded me that to attempt to wrench a leg out again would merely plunge my person, as a unit, farther in. I looked round, but there was no one in sight. I had also been warned, possibly on unjustifiable grounds, that it was well to avoid meeting the Indians of this region in isolated places. However, it was necessary to act without further loss of time. I therefore placed my camera on the crust and removed my coat. This I stretched on the surface

so as to provide some extra resistance. I then leaned my forearms horizontally on it. Distributing my weight thus over as much surface as possible, I was able, by a supreme effort, to pull my legs out suddenly one after the other. My arms broke through the crust, but the coat prevented them from digging deep into the mud. Stepping lightly and quickly over the surface, I got to firm ground. As the population around did not seem to attain to anything in the neighbourhood of five hundred to the square mile, I removed my garments and washed them in the lake. Ultimately I succeeded in completing my circumambient tour.

On the way back to Otavalo I noticed that between Ibarra and the volcano Imbabura there lay a singularly choice vale. On one side was the majestic volcano, on the other was a ridge of lesser mountains. From this ridge descended successive spurs to meet the valley, which, in reality, was a small depressed plain, laughing and happy in excess of perpetual felicity and spring. Some of these spurs were wooded, some were steep. Each successive pair was enclosing a tumbling stream and was filled by a separate contingent of mist and rain, on which the sunlight, from somewhere mysterious, was falling. To the west of the road was another broader and greater plain stretching over to the distant cordillera. This northern region of Ecuador is in intimate connection with Colombia, and the relations between the two countries being generally friendly, the commerce is considerable. In the south of Colombia there are several important towns, of which Pasto, with its 40,000 people, is the most prominent. The easiest contact which these towns have with the outer world is through Ecuador. Thus you will read that the Rev. Bishop of Pasto



COTACACHI AND THE LAKE OF ST. PAUL



"THE LAKE OF BLOOD"



IBARRA AND IMBABURA



FROM THE HEIGHTS ABOVE IBARRA

is going through Quito on his way to Rome, and while there had a confab with his Reverendissimo brother in Christ the Archbishop of Quito. We met a troop of thirty-three animals on the road going to Colombia; but very soon this picturesque mode of transport will be eliminated by the completion of the motor-road.

I left Otavalo in the early morning to return to Quito. Slowly we climbed into the hills which lie around the lake of San Pablo. We were fortunate enough to run off the rails, which afforded an extra opportunity to examine the country at greater leisure. The shores of this lovely lake would be overrun with tourists and visitors in countries more favoured in wealth and communications. It is a silver sheet of water watched ceaselessly by the tutelary spirits of the mountains around. In the morning sun which shines over these choice Andean hills, the light that never was on sea or land found a resting-place upon that motionless surface. Quiet and untroubled it was as though a complete stranger to the terrible and impulsive forces with which it companied. To the north, rising from the very shores, was the volcano of Imbabura. The lower slopes were innocently decked out in yellow fields of wheat, alternating with the squares of green and bending maize. Here too the eucalyptus had happily been planted in favourable spots. Farther up was a small crater around which were ascending luminous and streaming clouds. The irregular and snow-touched peaks overlooked the whole scene. To the west was the line of the cordillera. With the advancing day the clouds were moving upwards to hide the summits. But the great and solitary mountain of Cotocachi was unconquered yet. The culminating point was sharp, dropping slightly

towards the south on to a level platform of snow. Between the waters and this volcano was the valley of Otavalo, separated from us by a *loma*, or low saddle of hills. St. Paul's water was surrounded by the huts of the Indians. The furrowed vales of the distance contrasted with the silent reeds of the margin and the green shores filling the nearer view. It was a scene of freshness and of peace and of beauty, as at the birth of a prophet's millennium.

CHAPTER XVIII

HATS AND BOATS

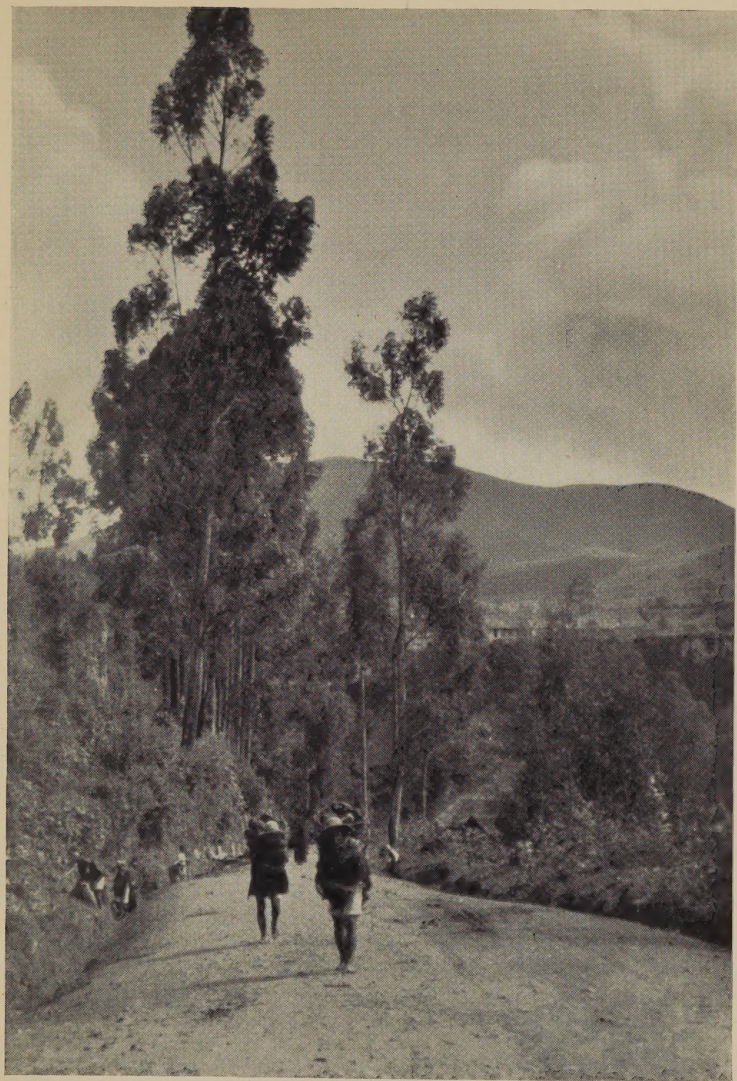
MANTA is a curious little town on the coast of Ecuador, in a bay facing north-east. As a modern commercial port it must be among the wonders of the civilized world. At the very sight of it authors wax authentic, bards poetic, artists artful, and stenographers fast. At a nearer acquaintance Phyllis rises from her love-sick dreams and Archibald's interest in life revives. Thousands of pounds must surely have been appropriated for machinery and wharfs. Every day passes in the expectation that an order has been placed for the greatest floating dock that the mind of man has ever conceived. Meanwhile the actual works consist of the sea, the shore, and the offing. The remainder is a matter of faith. There is no vestige of a pier or anything so utterly modern and revolutionary. Yet there is quite a little trade that goes on. Passengers land in rowboats, being carried through the breakers for the final stage of the journey in the arms of a brawny gentleman who specializes in the art. Cargo is landed and shipped in the same way. The place has about five thousand people, and consists of a nucleus round the custom-house and a string of houses reaching along the bay. The houses are nearly all built on high piles and made from the usual flattened bamboos, with the exception of the roofs, which have mostly clothed themselves in corrugated iron. There is a diminutive market and a plaza down by the shore.

Formerly this province of Manabi was the home of large numbers of Indians, whose origin has never been definitely explained. Some archæological work has been done in the region, but there still remains much to be accomplished. The peculiar stone seats of Manabi are said to be unique in the continent. They have been found principally near Montecristi. These Indians have long since disappeared as distinctive groups, although most of the people of the province have Indian blood. Spanish, however, is the universal language. The aspect of the coast is totally distinct from that of Peru, and differs again in details from Guayaquil. For a few miles inland there is fairly level ground, liable to inundations in the rains, with a sprinkling of trees, and covered with a thick mottling of miscellaneous marsh vegetation. Once this stage is passed the land begins to rise slightly, and low lines of hills, which are clothed with vegetation to their summits, interrupt the country. The rainfall is heavy, and the average annual temperature 82° to 84° F. Many of the usual products of the tropical forest are found, including rubber. But 'ivory-nuts', or *tagua*, and panama hats constitute the speciality of the province. A large proportion of the panama hats of the world come from Manabi. The name merely attaches to them from the days when they were reshipped at the isthmus. The straw is taken from a palm locally known as *toquilla* (*Carludovica palmata*). This palm is found from Central America to Peru, not only on the coastal but also on the interior slopes of the Andes. In all these regions hats are made for local sale or exportation, generally in small quantities. For example, Rioja, near Moyobamba, is a Peruvian centre of the industry. Montecristi and Jipijapa are the two focal points in Ecuador for hat manu-

facture. Montecristi is about 9 miles from Manta and visible from a steamer in the roadstead. Half an hour on the light railway that runs up-country is sufficient to take the visitor to the station, which consists of a single bamboo hut. From this nexus of traffic it is but a few minutes' walk to the hub and centre, the Manchester and Leipzig, of the industry in hats.

Nearly everyone in and around Montecristi makes headwear. Some give their whole time to it, while others have subsidiary occupations as well. I was under the impression that Jipijapa was the leading market in the business, but I am assured by the Montecristians that this is a gross libel, and that the Jipijapanese know approximately as much about making hats as their grandmothers did of wireless telephony. The hat-makers work in their own houses and the industry is not in any way organized. I went round with a friend to see a Montecristian at his job. He showed us first of all the smooth straw, resembling raffia. The leaves of the palm are taken just before opening and dipped into boiling water, with a little lemon-juice. They are then dried in the sun, after which they shrivel into stringy threads, which are prepared for weaving simply by shaping them with the fingers. The hats are woven over blocks according to the size of the crown. The block is placed on a support on the knee and on top of it is a pad. The weaver then leans over and rests his chest on the pad. He holds one lot of straws in each hand and plaits them together, working always on the side farthest from him. All the work must be done in this position. He does not continue round and round the hat, but from a central line weaves his way once round and then back again. The start is made in the middle of the crown, and more and more straws

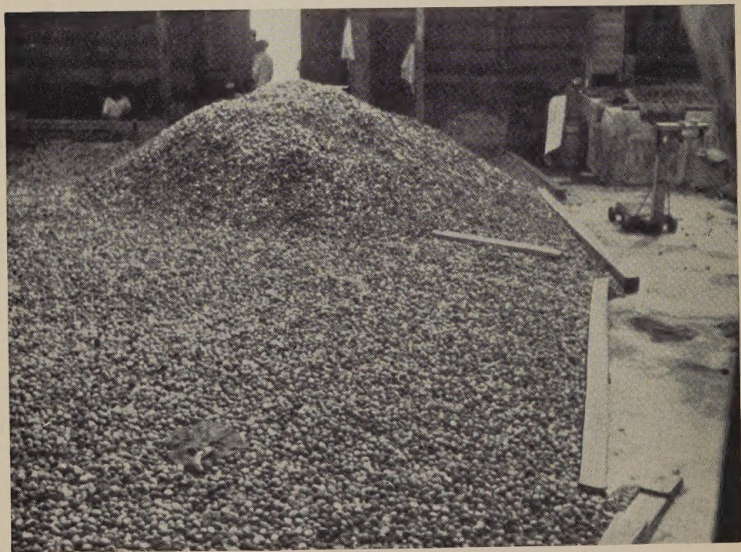
added as the work proceeds. These additions are so made that they leave a slight spiral line, but in the best hats this should be almost invisible on the outside. The straws must be kept moistened with plenty of water throughout the process, and must be of uniform thickness. They not infrequently break. There is a large variety of different qualities made. The distinctions between the higher qualities are not always easy to recognize at first sight, but become obvious on closer inspection or on feeling the hat. They take varying times to complete, according to the degree of excellence. Some occupy a few days only and others up to six months. Thus a hat that costs 50s. in Montecristi takes a month, more or less, before it is ready. So the people say, but as a fact they work at several simultaneously. A hat that would be valued at about £50 in England would entail six months' steady labour in the weaving. In the streets of Manta a gossip-writer can size up society by the quality of its headgear. The men make the best workers, but women become experts at the art, and children practise from their earliest years. The fingers of those in whose families hat-making has been a traditional occupation are exceptionally delicate. It is curious and interesting to see such a well-known industry still so little touched by the conditions of modern commerce. Ultimately some wealthy capitalist, with his superfluous but, alas, necessary ducats, will come along and put up a stinker of a factory and plant thousands of the trees, and then our hats will no longer be made by hand, but by numbers of identityless hands. But at present it is not so. Montecristi itself nestles at the foot of a line of hills rich with the coastal rain forest, where the palms grow in abundance. It is a quiet, sleepy little place. The houses are all walled



THE BURDEN-BEARERS OF ECUADOR



TRANSPORT IN MANTA BAY



THE TAGUA NUT

and floored with beaten bamboos. The grass grows even in the main and, it might be said, the only street. The place stands a short distance up the slopes. Down below the diminutive railway, with its Lilliputian trucks and its frantically Rocket-like engine, follows on to Portoviejo, the capital of the province. No motors are about in the wet season. From the church steps you can look over the green coastal plain to the infinite leagues of the ocean of Balboa, the peaceful and stormless sea. The climate is always the same, warm, lazy, and redolent of ease. It is certain, of course, that the conditions of the trade could be improved. Possibly a good deal of the 'truck' system goes on, as in the case of the rubber trade. The merchants in Montecristi have 'feeders' who travel round the country to buy from the people. They then send the hats down to Manta, where the exporting houses have agents. So your prize panama is collected from some humble bamboo hut along the coast, brought to Montecristi or Jipijapa on a donkey's back, sent down to Manta on the toy railway, carried through the waves on someone's shoulders and packed in a rowing-boat; put on a sailing-boat for Guayaquil, or perhaps on a wandering tramp or passenger steamer, taken across the ocean and transferred therefrom, through, I suppose, another barge of intermediate Shylocks, to the apex of your princely and pampered pate. From time to time to the remote little spot comes the news that the fashion has changed across the seas, and the 'Norte-americanos' want hats with such a breadth of rim, and the 'Ingleses' with this or that, and this information has to go penetrating into all the little villages and isolated shacks.

Manta Bay is a delightful spot. In some places the tide comes up to the edge of the 'front', but in

others there is always a stretch of beach. At low water there are leagues of the hard, damp sand, which provides the only motor-road the town possesses all the year round. A few groups of rocks break the continuity of the beach. A beautiful collection of shells could be made here, of all kinds and all colours. Some are most intricate spirals, big and heavy, with unusual markings, others the common qualities seen by many waters. Others were racing over the sand in thousands at a speed which no snail could develop even with training, and on picking these up they were found to be occupied by hermit crabs with six lively legs. Out in the harbour are a dozen or more heavily built sailing-boats of about 10 tons each, with a mainsail and large jib, not unlike a fishing-smack in general lines. The weather is never inclement, the sea never really rough. The little waves break continually on the shelving foreshore. All night long they make a pleasant and soothing music in your ears. By day the ocean is as blue as the sky above. Meanwhile hundreds of bags of *tagua* accumulate along the foreshore, waiting for some overdue steamer to anchor in the bay. The sailing-boats pull close in and land their cargo by wading. Some fine fish are caught, and the small boys never seem to go home empty-handed.

One morning I went down to the front and saw two steamers anchored in the bay, loading passengers and cargo. The contemplation of this operation seems to be the chief diversion of the populace of Manta, and it is not such a bad one. The tide was high and the Pacific in a small way turbulent. It was a rare entertainment to watch the sailing-boats manœuvring. They came as near as possible to the beach in order to receive cargo to take out to the

ships. They banged into each other, dispatched hands to struggle through the waves with innumerable ropes, violently hurled anchors about the Pacific, and called upon their countrymen on shore to witness that the other fellow who came last was taking the best berth. The offing looked like a spider's web slovenly woven with the confusion of all the intertwined cables. A healthy ocean swell was running, which added to the enthusiasm, and it did not look as if the boats were made with any keels. They were loading *tagua* and panama hats. The former, if in contact with salt water, apparently comes to no harm, as no special precautions were taken, and one bag was dropped in the sea, while the bearer contemplatively scratched his top-mast and called on his companions to give a hand in extracting it. The hats were packed in square wooden boxes. An individual carried one out unaided to a certain depth, when three more joined him, and they covered the last stage with their cargo at arm's length above their heads. One of the ships was a British tramp discharging Portland cement. This was brought close in on board the sailing-boats. Everyone then stepped on one side of the boat and a barrel was merely rolled off on to the shoulders of two bearers. Again and again a big wave went clean over the heads of the men and submerged the barrel, but no one seemed to worry. The passenger traffic was equally damp and engaging. The rowing-boats discharged their occupants on to the persons of the semi-naked attendants. Nearly everyone got wet. The alternatives of this form of transport lie between sitting across the gentleman's shoulders and being carried in his arms. One portly transient insisted on having four individuals to convey him, but his keel ploughed the

ocean deep in spite of his anxiety. Another official personage was coming ashore in a white uniform, properly weighted, like a diver's suit, with whole slabs of gold braid and ribbons. But the sea is no respecter of persons. He was almost through his Jordan safely when a mighty wave hit the bearer on the back of his knees and he collapsed, neatly depositing his burden where it might probably have remained without any great loss to the administration of the Republic. We all tolled for the brave, but a junior minion was dispatched to disperse the small boys, whose presence did not conduce to gravity. Apparently this sort of thing goes on invariably in Manta when the tide is up and the water at all disturbed.

That evening I had booked a passage to Guayaquil in a craft known as a *motovelero*, or auxiliary sailing-boat. They trade up and down the coast from Guayaquil. The *motovelero* turned up at 8.30 p.m. It was raining heavily, but the tide was out and the sea moderate. I was successfully conveyed to the preliminary rowing-boat. A family of six were embarking at the same time, and one of the children was completely submerged in transit and howled vociferously. All luggage was drenched. A desperate leap transferred me to the sailing-boat and I was indicated my cabin. The water was swishing to and fro over the floor. By way of compensation, however, there was none available for washing. I took a top bunk. The deck was leaking madly, and it was difficult to know whether the bunk was meant to be merely wet or submerged. The motion of that craft was certainly picturesque. If I could have conserved my share of it and turned it into power, it would have driven a nut-cracking machine with perfect ease for the rest of the year.

The next morning I looked round. The *motovelero* was called the *Plus Ultra*, which she may have been plus, but she was certainly minus everything else. She was schooner-rigged and about 60 tons, something of the size of the *Santa Maria* of Columbus fame. In the after part was a group of small cabins for first-class passengers. A minute saloon served for eating, drinking, quarrelling, grumbling, or any other normal occupation of life. Forward under the foresail and on top of a cargo hatch was the second-class accommodation. It appeared that there were no specific third-class quarters. There was a total absence of any bathroom, and as the water-tank had just burst, out of sympathy with the rain, there was no accessible fresh water. At meals we drank a fearsome bottled dope known in these parts as *kola*, supplied from the bar, and apparently compounded from fresh red ink, imagination, and enthusiasm. I was hoping we would proceed under sail, but I heard Columbus remark that he was in a hurry and wished to get a move on. This he succeeded in doing in so many directions that only one other passenger turned up for lunch. During the morning we saw any number of sharks. At 12.30 p.m. we arrived at La Libertad, an oil station of the Anglo-Ecuadorian Company. From here we pushed on a few miles farther south to Salinas, which is struggling to acquire a reputation as a watering-place during the summer months for the families of Quito and Guayaquil. On leaving Salinas we rounded the southern point of Ecuador. The ocean surf was magnificent here on the rocks, as fine as can be seen anywhere along this coast. After rounding the point we could set all our canvas, as the wind was about half a point before the beam. The sunset was radiant and red. It was refreshing

to be under sail once more, to watch the jib lifting and enjoy the slight heel that the wind was sufficient to give the little schooner. We bowled along at a steady rate. The breeze died away at midnight, but with the day we were able to utilize a light following air, and the morning flood took us quickly up the River Guayas. We arrived at Guayaquil at 10.30 a.m.

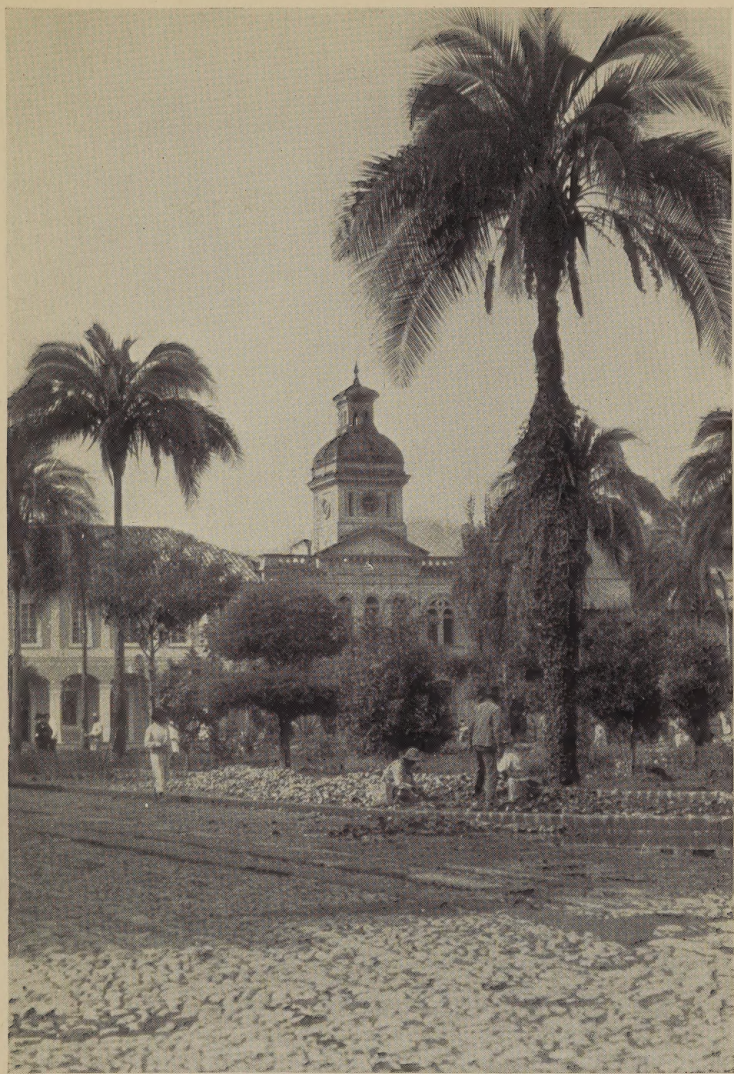
CHAPTER XIX

THE CAUCA VALLEY

ON the morning of May 2nd we entered the channel which leads up to Buenaventura, the Pacific port of Colombia. The place is tucked in behind an island, and the shores were low and swampy, overpowered by a thin forest, lacking any feature of distinction. The houses were built of bamboos and raised on piles. The inhabitants fished or otherwise diverted themselves in the flimsiest and most insignificant of dugout canoes. The town was swarming over a little hill which rose at the end of the channel. There is a sharp bend to be made before reaching the anchorage, and just beyond this bend was the wreck of the *Tritonia* obstructing the fairway. The unfortunate ship had blown up a few months previously with 250 tons of dynamite on board. She was anchored about a mile from the shore, but a piece of iron weighing 183 pounds nearly fell on the Grace Company's offices, and many windows were broken. Only two officers were on board, who had gone to open the sea-cocks and sink the ship, and their corpses were not recovered. An officer on a ship anchored about a quarter of a mile away died of a heart-attack, apparently from the air concussion.

Buenaventura is chiefly distinguished for rain. The average annual rainfall during 1910-1916, when records were kept, was 280 inches, and in 1916 they had a bumper year with 320 inches. It takes rank,

therefore, as one of the wettest places in the world. The town itself has little to attract interest. In the background the western cordillera overlooks the port, a line of irregular hills, blue and indistinct, flecked with vagrant clouds, half hidden by coverlets of soft and clinging mist. A narrow street runs through the centre of the place, which, with its suburbs and the outlying villages, has a population of over 25,000. On the high ground the houses are made of boards and planks painted in variegated colours, with the usual overhanging balconies. The port has an unmistakably busy appearance. Scores of Negroes, here a most important element in the population, jostle up and down, smiling and chattering and investing the scene with a decided air of vivacity. There is an abundance of saloons, small *bureaux de change*, beer at 10 cents a glass, and stores—the 'Little Parisian' or the 'Bazar Ingles'—where 'every person of good taste' makes his purchases. Most persons of good taste in Buenaventura chiefly purchase ice-cream or umbrellas. The view from the hill over the harbour was typical. The thatched houses of the people stood along the very edge of the steep cliff which leads down to the sea. Palms and banana-trees occupy all the odd corners. The tide was out, and great flats of mud lay bare, steaming and repellent. In these deposits of tropical fetidity small boys were desultorily engaged in looking for various species of humble and maritime fauna. The port appeared almost landlocked. The diminutive canoes were threading their way through the channels left by the receding waters. One or two exhibited a small white sail to profit off the fitful breeze. Beyond the dwindling pools in the main anchorage was the hideous wreck of the *Tritonia*, a mangled piece of twisted iron standing stark and



A SIERRA TOWN



CROSSING THE CENTRAL CORDILLERA



DAWN IN THE ANDES

alone above the water. In the evening, from the veranda of the hotel I took a long, last look over the Pacific. A German steamer was passing out of the natural harbour on to that immeasurable deep whose extremest waters lap the shores of civilizations so far apart in much besides mere distance. The fishermen were poling their dugouts over the flats to reap the harvest of the twilight hours. The rain, which had fallen heavily in the afternoon, was now retreating from the landscape. Already the tide was lapping round the piles at the base of the hotel.

The two chains of the Andes of Ecuador unite in a confused mountain mass in the south of Colombia known as the Nudo de Pasto. From this Nudo or knot the three Colombian cordilleras take their origin and extend northwards through the length of the country. Between them are profound depressions in which run rivers of considerable importance. The western and central ranges enclose the valley of the Cauca, and the central and the eastern that of the Magdalena. These two rivers unite and pour their waters into the Caribbean Sea. On the eastern slopes of the Cordillera Oriental rise the affluents of the Amazon and Orinoco Rivers. The highest peaks of the Colombian Andes exceed 18,000 feet, but, generally speaking, the summits are not snow-covered. The existence of these deep longitudinal valleys and the excessive steepness of the mountain slopes has made the attainment of rapid communications exceedingly difficult. The Magdalena is to-day the chief artery of the nation's trade, and provides the ordinary route to Bogotá, the capital, which stands in a plateau or *sabana* in the eastern range. The important towns of the Cauca valley find their contact with the outside world chiefly through the port of Buenaventura, and up to the

present they have been largely cut off from the rest of the Republic. For some years work has been in progress on a railway which will eventually unite Bogotá with the Pacific. The motor-road over the summit of the central cordillera was opened in 1929, and when the range has been tunnelled, it will be possible to run through trains from the capital to the Pacific Coast. Cali, the railway and trade centre of the fertile region of the Cauca, has, as a result of these activities, already acquired an air of considerable prosperity.

From the brow of the western cordillera it was possible to get some faint idea of the richness of this region. The valley lay out beneath us, reaching away to the central range, whose summits were hidden in the clouds. It was about 30 miles broad and an irresistibly glorious sight. Fields and woods disputed the predominance. It resembled a vast but verdant carpet, wrought with the skill of the artificer of the East, combining in an indissoluble pattern those elements of which the terrestrial paradises of nature are composed. Level and green it was, vague in the distance, indistinct from our commanding altitude even in its nearest proximity. Grey blots of shadow moved across it, interrupting the rays of the afternoon sun, like the dark patches on the wastes of the sea. The calm and clemency of summer was there with the freshness of perpetual spring. The train descended the range, crawling round the spurs, passing through small tunnels, looping over and beneath itself, while the landscape was divided and rearranged as though touched by the wand of an invisible magician. The winding stream of the Cauca came into view, carving a sinuous channel through this magnificent garden. If the valley of the Amazon were thus . . . !

South of Cali is the old town of Popayan. The train runs up the valley of the Cauca, following along the western range close to the foothills. The great bulk of this cordillera seemed to overpower you. The hills were green where the light fell on them, grave and pensive in the shadow. The clouds were clinging around them, and from the council chambers of the showers issued sheets of mist and rain. Meanwhile the vale was brilliant and glad in the sunshine. From the slight elevations over which the line follows it is possible to see across the valley-floor into the distant east. Filling the remoter leagues there seemed to be a ceaseless reiteration of wood and meadow till every feature was lost in the central cordillera. Actually fields lay between the trees, green, fresh, and fat with abundance of pasture. The cattle were grazing, but alas, in tragically small numbers, congregated in the friendly shade, meditating by the streams of water. Groves, copses, and single trees entered the view in continual but never monotonous succession. Occasional tall and lofty palms bent in the breeze, and groups of graceful bamboos, a common characteristic of the Colombian tropics, were bowing over crystal pools. The luxuriance of the equatorial latitudes was at one with the fertile verdure of the great pastoral plains. Delicately leaved were the trees, while occasional branched monarchs reigned over insignificant dominions of shade. Further south the plain is limited by the inexorable hills. The yellow flood of the Cauca was about 100 yards broad, tending to narrow rapidly. The foothills pressed down to quench their thirst with something more ample than the rain. The river ran between banks of high-waving reeds and coteries of bamboos. In spite of a prosaic name, the groups of bamboos are so unquestionably

appealing that to no small extent they constitute the peculiar charm of this region of Colombia. Why call so lovely a creation with such a top-heavy and Biblically genealogical a name?

Some distance up the valley we crossed the river and commenced to climb into the hills. This part of the journey was incomparably fine. As a railway view it was as superior to the vaunted Central Railway of Peru as that surpasses in attraction the underground from Liverpool Street to Oxford Circus. The line curled round some preliminary hills, and then commenced to climb the almost vertical sides of the mountain, clinging to the rocks as though by a new and ultra-Newtonian law. The cliffs became absolutely perpendicular in parts and the rocks bare, menacing, and stern. In other places they were overhung with creepers, the wanderers of the waste. We passed round curves at an infantile pace, and over a great bridge spanning a gorge of impressive depth. This bridge was on so sharp a bend that it seemed that the least acceleration would have sent us into the abyss. The farther slopes were clothed with a universal green. Far below was the course of the river, now appearing as a meandering stream. The glory of the valley can only be seen from its protecting and prison walls. Supreme beauty of landscape is formed of elements from all creation's categories. It can no more dispense with the flower than the forest; or with the snow than with the sea; or with the peasant's home than with the majesty of the great cathedral.

Popayan was founded in 1537. It was at one time one of the most notable of Colombia's cities, a centre of learning and culture. It has given a long line of distinguished men to the Republic. It possesses a university, now in comparative decadence

and the home of religious conservatism. It is also the seat of an archbishopric, and is therefore an ecclesiastical metropolis. But the sacred and colonial architecture here cannot compare with that in Bolivia and Peru. There is no place where the student can study the colonial styles so well as in Potosí, unless it be in Cuzco of the Incas. Those two places stand out as being the most fascinating of American cities from this standpoint. They impress you with an atmosphere which makes it easy to recall the tragedies of the Indian peoples and the vigilance of the Inquisition. Cartagena is a similar spot, but its historical glory is in its fortresses rather than in its churches. In Popayan you are once more in touch with the essential life of the country. The streets are cobbled with great irregular stones. In Colombia there are no numerous groups of Indians, speaking a distinct language and wearing distinctive dress, as in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. But in Popayan you see a few about in their ponchos and peculiar straw hats. Churches are tucked away into odd and unexpected corners. The houses are tiled and low. On the outside of one church there was a notice of a feast in the honour of a saint I had not seen honoured under that title before—the Santo Ecce-Homo.

The town is situated on a low plateau about 5,000 feet above the sea. This plateau is a northern extension of the Nudo de Pasto, and in it the Cauca as well as other rivers have their sources. The country is broken into knotted hills, interspersed with small *quebradas* and groups of trees. The days were as fresh as a dawn in the Ægean, and the air as keen as in many a place of much higher elevation. The 'cool-haired creepers' were falling over the steeper fortresses of rock in the hills. The flowers

were glad in the damp of the shade. Immediately to the east is the church and monastery of Belen, with a handsome tower, on the brow of a commanding elevation. Farther out in the same direction the hills ascend one behind the other, like a giant staircase of Olympic beings, to the volcano of Puracé. From this sombre monument to hidden and uncontrollable forces rises a column of smoke almost without intermission. Popayan itself constantly receives a baptism of ashes, although the monster is frequently hidden by the clouds. To the north a wide extension of plateau died in the threatening and stormy horizon. To the west and south the same country stretched away, with its islands of bushes and eucalyptus and a few isolated farms. Masses of changing cumulus swept over the open heaven, the uneasy, living crown on the brow of the cordillera, embodying the eternal metamorphosis of the skies.

On May 9th I left Palmira, near Cali, for Bogotá. In the soft morning light, so welcome before the harsher glare of the midday hours, the valley of the Cauca again presented an exquisite scene. The sun was rising over the central range, lighting up a mass of bright-edged clouds. The clefts among the mountain folds were sleeping late in the cool of the continued shade. The immensity of the potential resources around threw into relief the little attention given as yet to modern methods of agriculture in Colombia. Great stretches of level verdure were lying in unproductive waste. Beautiful among fluvial basins of the earth must be the valley of this river. Such secret joys are the treasures of the immense, the scarce-conquerable Andes, and to hide them from profane and careless eyes were these cordilleras raised. The sequestered luxuries of the vale meet here. The warmth and the tempered

breeze unite and dissolve in the cool of the delicate corners of shade. Rain and sunshine war no more, but link together in a perpetual felicity. Copses and single trees, isolated and magnificent giants, vied with the groves of pensive and inclining bamboos. As far as the cordillera the surface was flat and level, yet divorced from monotony. There the mountain and the plain joined in a rare but perpetual convocation of nature, where, unlike mortal parliaments, no dissentient voice was heard. The clouds were over the hills, densely crowded above the central range. Slowly they moved from north to south like a vast, resistless host performing on the march evolutions on a Napoleonic scale. Forming they were and reforming, unfolding new banners, raising brighter and more brilliant standards, disbanding regiments and corps, annexing from the incalculable resources of the azure depths beyond increasing but reluctant reinforcements.

The railway terminated in Armenia, a place of about 20,000 people benefiting unusually from the general boom in business consequent upon constructional activities. I can say without hesitation that there was more mud visible in the streets of Armenia than it has been my pleasure to contemplate in a town of that size for many a day. Crowning the mud was a strange and varied assortment of odours, belonging to diverse families, genera, species, and varieties. Matrimony was performed among them without any respect for the Christian laws of monogamy. Companionate marriages were universal, divorce unnecessary. Birth-control was an unimagined dream, prolificity a standing rule. One single such odour, therefore, was able to gather up all the characteristics of untold generations of the past and smite your person with an irresistible

triumph. The forty centuries of scents looked down upon you as you took the corners and seized you unawares. Without further evidence one could almost have vowed that innumerable Christians were rotting in the drains of Armenia. As a consequence, mosquitoes made merry.

Apart from these minor inconveniences, the place was most desirable. The wooden houses, with their overhanging balconies, the neat central plaza, the church with its tapering spire, and the setting among the hills, suggested European scenes. The situation of the town was its glory. It stood on a ledge leading up to the heights of the central cordillera. But it was surrounded, apparently on all sides, by profound and precipitous *quebradas*. It seemed as impregnable as Cartagena de Indias itself. To the south-west was a deep gorge, festooned with garlands, for the display of which nature needs no honoured feast. The noise of the stream away below made a pleasant music in your ears. To the east was the wealth and wonder of the mountains. A profusion of trees covered the slopes, an exuberance of forest. Open spaces were there too, as though to provide a measure of variety. Sometimes the bare rocks stood out in isolation, sometimes cliff towered above cliff to the summits above. The clouds were at the same moment at business and at play. At times they seemed to leave an indescribable impression of accumulated agonies. On other heights they were resigned and soft. Rain-storms, petulant and angry, swept into the valley. The line of division between the storm and the peace was as definite as the frontiers of more tangible realms. Then the rain would clear away and leave the clouds resting on the summits as though tired at last in their ceaseless chase, their constant charity of terrestrial beneficence at last for



BOGOTÁ, THE PARK



REPAIRING THE MOTOR ROAD



LOOKING TOWARDS TOLIMA

a time exhausted. To the north it was ever sinister and grey over open heights and rolling moors. Towards sunset the mountain-tops were lit by a sacred glow of golden light as of an evening in a temple sanctuary. The lower slopes, clothed unwillingly in a Puritan grey, coveted their warmth. Gloom and joy were in struggle and embrace.

On the following morning I embarked in a car for the village of San Miguel. I had opportunity to see on this journey that the cordilleras of the Andes in Colombia are not simply ridges but ranges divided by intermediate and deep depressions. Lofty as seemed the climb out of Armenia, for example, San Miguel lay in such a valley, while beyond there was yet another divide. The road left Armenia, passed through the town of Calarca, and commenced to climb into the cordillera. The slopes were wooded with a variety of trees and palms. The mud made the route next to impassable at some points, while at others the cliff had so fallen away that it seemed a dangerous undertaking to attempt the passage. The extreme steepness of the mountain-side, just permitting the smaller trees to maintain a footing, added a peculiar charm to this section of the hills. The heavy rainfall and constant damp and the absence of definite and regular pluvial seasons makes the vegetation rich and princely. The view from these heights surpassed the utmost poetry of the imagination. We were ascending a cleft in the hills, the *quebrada* of the River Quindio. Down below, the town of Armenia already seemed like an insignificant settlement. Beyond lay the valley of the Cauca, one in the grey distance with the eastern cordillera. The hum of the nascent streams was never absent. The glory of extension was there in its fullness, the appeal of fertile and

unfathomed immensities. The road was winding down in impossible bends. To north and south the spurs of the hills were jutting out. The river-plain of the Cauca was in the sunlight, the shadows falling in recurring patches. Presently a veil of heavy nimbus began to form. Beneath this the same expansion was still visible. It was like the curtain of a theatre of cosmic dimensions slowly falling on a living stage, where tragedy was a reality, comedy too tragically scarce, where figures were no longer actors, and, as often, only men were vile.

San Miguel was situated in a little valley where ran a nameless stream. It was necessary to take animals here, as the motor-road had been washed out in the heavy rains. We passed through the village of Anaime and began to climb the cordillera again by a steep zigzag trail. Half-way up I stopped for a few seconds for the fiftieth time to contemplate the beauties of that little stream from whose banks we had climbed into the mountains. Suddenly I saw a new thing. In the north the clouds had dispersed and a perfect, an incomparable snow-peak was raising its white head above a mass of curling cumulus. I watched it for some distance while working up the zigzags of the path, till evening darkness blotted out the view. It was about 15 miles distant, and was one of the choicest sights to be witnessed in the extension of the Andes. The great summits of Peru and Bolivia are bolder, grander, and loftier yet. But they are lost among a host of companions whose prestige is scarcely inferior. For the most part they are to be viewed from windswept plateaux or barren solitudes. The Nevada de Tolima stood alone. Among a host of lesser hills it is a remarkable sight to see a single snow-covered peak surveying all, distinct from its fellows with the

insignia of other realms. The mountain was content and calm in the supreme pre-eminence of isolation. No rival was at hand to dispute its claims. It joyed in the exclusive exaltation of the unique. It is easy to excel in a field where there are no competitors, but when that excellence is wellnigh immaculate in itself, the pre-eminence is made perfect. Goethe made peace to dwell on the mountain-top, the temple where the angered spirits of nature again unite to seek a noble restfulness. The sentiment seemed to fit the beautiful mountain. Masses of clouds were hiding the intermediate heights, and it was just possible to see down to the snow limit. The altitude of this peak is about 18,400 feet, and it is, according to many, the highest in Colombia. The Nevada is an extinct volcano. The summit was perfectly rounded and slightly inclined towards the east. The crater was showing, lighted by the sun's slanting rays on one side, shaded on the other. As the evening progressed the whole fell into the advancing grey. The sculpture of the snow must have been on a fantastic scale, as from my distance great furrows and slides were clearly discernible. The splendour of the whole view was only comparable with that of the peak itself. We looked down upon the valley from the majesty of dominance and up to the heights with the awe of humiliation. The stream was threading its way past the lower slopes of Tolima. We had climbed to about 8,000 feet when the night was coming on. The evening shadows began to form and rolling surges of mist suddenly seemed to appear from above. The clouds were filling the clefts and the valleys. The eastern ridge was still faintly lit by the dying light of the sun. Vague feelings oppressed the soul and indistinct longings. 'Abide with us, Lord, the day is far spent, and the night approacheth', was my prayer.

Presently, in a rift of the clouds, the fair young moon appeared, a day and a half old, grasping in her arms the faint reflection of her former glory. A single star was riding in solitude beneath her, guarding alone the spaces of the west. At 8 p.m. we reached a small house on the top of the cordillera, where we slept.

CHAPTER XX

AN INLAND CAPITAL

ON a mountain plateau or *sabana* nearly 9,000 feet above the sea stands the city of Santa Fe de Bogotá, the capital of the Colombian Republic. For the capital of a growing nation it is strangely isolated, and the journey from the Atlantic coast occasionally takes three weeks or even more. The aeroplane, to-day, has come to the rescue of this inland metropolis. At the same time Bogotá has not only steadily increased in size, but it is the centre and distributing point for a very large rural population. An air of conservatism, almost amounting in these days to a sense of unreality, still haunts this place, but with increasing facilities for communications and education this will disappear in the coming years. The monotony of the colonial period has been perpetuated here longer than in other South American capitals. During the period of nearly four hundred years since its foundation and the dramatic meeting on the same spot, and by a rare coincidence, of Jiménez de Quesada from the Atlantic coast, Benalcazar from Ecuador, and Federmann, who for three years had been fighting his way across the llanos of Venezuela, little of importance took place in the city. Political intrigue, the appointments of the Church, attendance at Mass or at the ball, loitering around the Viceroy's palace, small talk and scandal, fill that colourless interval. The arrival of a traveller from the coast,

or of news from far-off Spain, was the only event of any public interest. In the midst of this isolation a small but select literary coterie developed, and the 'Athens of South America', as Bogotá has sometimes been called, has always been distinguished for its achievement in the sphere of letters. The city to-day can boast of 235,000 people, and most of the up-to-date conveniences of urban development are to be found there.

There is little of interest in the town itself beyond the historical monuments, but the situation is impressive. To the east rise the imposing hills of Montserrat and Guadalupe. On the farther slopes of these hills are born the infant streams whose waters cross the boundless llanos and merge in the yellow flood of the Orinoco. On the summit of Montserrat is a church, built almost in a Gothic style, standing on the margin of a precipice and visible from almost every street in the city below. From this elevation of 1,200 feet above the *sabana* of Bogotá it was possible to get some idea of the surrounding country. The capital lay spread out beneath. There were few distinctive buildings, and the large plaza with the cathedral and Government offices was the only centre of prominence. From that altitude the street-cars appeared like indefatigable ants. Behind, in the east, was a confused system of valleys, and sinuous trails were stealing across the bulking hills. Beyond the city the level plain, the floor of the plateau, was green and perfectly flat, divided into fields or spotted with groups of trees, while country homes clustered together to form small villages. A margin of heights ringed in this plain on every side. In the far distance appeared glimpses of the central cordillera. From beneath the clouds the mighty snow-peaks of Tolima, Herveo, and Ruiz

peeped out from time to time, looking down on the valley of the Magdalena, which divided them from us.

Seventeen miles from Bogotá is the Tequendama fall. Tequendama is made to be admired, created to be praised. It is set in a natural amphitheatre of rocks and crowned by towering cliffs. Just below the fall, and on a level with the summit, a small and suitably built hotel has been erected. The balcony of this hotel hangs over the gorge, looking down on a narrow ledge a few feet below, and then over a perpendicular leap into the depths beneath. It is a favourite and appropriate place for suicides from Bogotá. The giant walls close in on the stream to form the gorge in which the River Funza or Bogotá contracts to twenty or thirty yards in breadth. The water pours over a preliminary step about 15 feet down and then takes the final and vertical plunge. The sheer drop is 443 feet. The order and peace of the upper river is thrown into a desperate confusion and a fluvial riot takes the place of more sedate and regulated progress. The river seems to hurl itself down in an interminable succession of repeated rushes, each wave madly blind to the fate of its predecessor. The yellow flood was broken into foam, divided and scattered into multiple tongues of spray like a hail of comets charging wildly to an unpremeditated doom. The water in the gorge below was writhing and turning in a yeasty, foaming turmoil, vainly seeking to re-create the former peace. Only three-quarters of the drop was visible. The torrent, crashing recklessly on the lower rocks, dissolved into clouds of spray which hid the scene of the final débâcle and suggested the picture of a giant's cauldron, from whose unwholesome depths were rising volumes of mystery-concealing steam. All the elements of the unusual, the

rare, the irresistible, and the magnificent were present. In the vacancies around the waters swallow-like birds were flying in sudden, erratic swoops. The gorge itself was carpeted with mosses and moisture-loving ferns. It had been sunny during the journey, and for some minutes after my arrival the fall was clear and distinct. But almost immediately the clouds began to assemble. A damp fog rolled up the valley, and suddenly the vapours seemed to rise from the bottom and form in fleecy banks. A thin rain was drenching the hills around. The atomized spray curled upwards in ever-changing formations. Very soon Tequendama became invisible, detected alone by the solemn roar which no barrier could forbid. Rolled to and fro by indefinite airs, the moving masses of mist on this side or that divided and thinned into penetrable sheets, only to concentrate anew. At one time a pale, sickly sun would filter into the valley. Again the base of the gorge and the middle waters of the cascade itself would reveal themselves for a reluctant second. A mysterious and solitary bird appeared from the hidden spaces of the depths beneath. Then the relentless rain came on again and strove at the same time to conceal and swell the volume of the waters and to sweep away to the inaccessible ocean the treasures of the rivers and the rocks. Power was concealed by invisibility, beauty protected by the natural cloister's inviolable veil.

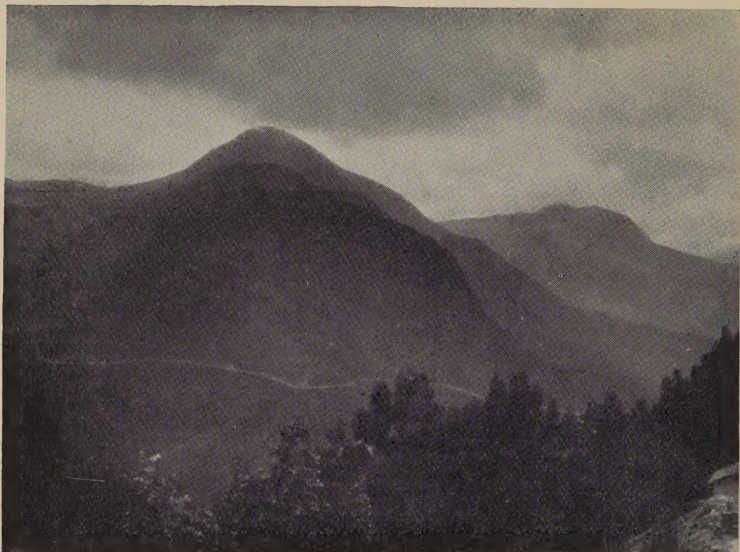
To the north of Bogotá is the town of Tunja, the capital of the department of Boyacá. The place was an important centre of the Chibcha civilization, and even to-day the department has a large Indian population whose habits have been altered almost imperceptibly in the last four hundred years. At Boyacá, 81 miles from Bogotá, is the battlefield



A STREET IN BOGOTÁ



THE LOWER SLOPES OF MONTSERRAT



STORMS IN THE COLOMBIAN ANDES



GIRARDOT

where by a decisive conflict the liberation of Colombia from the Spanish domination was accomplished under Simon Bolívar, after leading his troops in a historic march across the llanos of the Orinoco and the Meta. At the base of the monument commemorating the event the name of the British Legion, whose efforts helped not a little to achieve the victory, has an honourable place. Tunja at one time held a position of social prominence even greater than Bogotá, and was the home of some of the highest Spanish families in the colonial days. Although the municipality is credited with only 15,000 population, it is still an ecclesiastical centre of the first importance. When Jiménez de Quesada, the conquistador, first approached the town, he saw an unexpected sight. From the principal houses were suspended thin sheets of beaten gold, reflecting the declining sun, moving in the passing breezes, giving out a musical and ringing sound. It was the only real centre of wealth found by the Spaniards in this land where the legend of El Dorado had its origin, and from which it spread. The invaders overpowered the Indians, and the Zaque, or chief, Quemanchatocha, fell into their hands. The soldiers gave themselves up to plunder and pillage, shouting 'Pirú, Pirú, Pirú', the treasures reminding them of the tales of the wealth of Peru. The finest cloths, great quantities of emeralds, and numerous gold ornaments were piled up in the patio of the chief's palace. It is said that had Quesada arrived earlier he would have found even greater quantities of booty.

This material wealth has been exchanged for the spiritual glory of the Church, embodied not in a widely educated or notably God-fearing populace, but in the existence of seven large churches, a

cathedral, five minor churches, two convents, two monasteries, a seminary for aspirants to the priesthood, and a number of schools within the town. The place boasts a bishop with his court and episcopal palace. The plaza is a vast and dreary square. You feel on walking across it that everyone must be contemplating your movements. The town of to-day is a typical legacy of colonial times, replete with bygone fame, existing parasitically on the prestige of the past. No one does anything, for there is nothing to do. The men stand in groups about the street corners, talking about nothing of importance, for nothing important has happened in the last twenty years to merit discussion. The bishop and his intrigues, the fall of this *canonigo* or the appointment of that, the suspicions and small chatter, the scandals and merits of the ecclesiastical court, form the sole topics of interest in Tunja, just as they did among the dames and ladies of Thackeray's England. Many of the churches, including the cathedral, present no attraction on the outside but are richly ornamented in the interior. Much of this ornamentation is cheap and gaudy, but there are some objects of considerable value, including much beautiful panelling and some by no means despicable pictures. Throughout the day, but especially in the afternoon and the evening, the women stream into the churches to recite this devotion or that. Men can be seen at similar exercises, and in one edifice both sexes were queueing up before the confessional box, awaiting their turn to cast their burdens before the local priest.

Tunja lies in a valley between two confronting lines of hills. On the western line can be found two low stones, Chibcha relics known as *cojines*. They consist of raised circles solid with the ground,

the surface here being composed of a sheet of flat, bare, shaly rock. One is about $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet in diameter and the other $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet. They stand about a foot above the surrounding level. They are both cut away and slope down at the western end of their east-and-west diameters, the first over about two-fifths of the diametrical distance and the second about one-quarter. From the stones there is an uninterrupted view over the valley to the eastern range. They appear to have been used by the Zaques as kneeling-stones for worship of the rising sun. Standing with secular indifference where past generations have bowed the knee in adoration, a fine idea can be gathered of the trend of the country and of the nature of this region of the cordillera. The valley runs north and south, a long and even depression between the hills, closed in by slight eminences at either extremity. Near the south end was the town of Tunja, the modern market being the most prominent structure. For the rest there was little of note in the place. Several churches could be detected, but none of them was conspicuous. The reddish-brown tiles of the roofs harmonized with the prevalent colour of the soil around. The hills opened out to the north, a few *lomas* closing in the vale. Then after indefinite intervals the cordillera rose again into the grey mist and clouds. The slopes of the two lines of defence of the valley were gentle and easy, more like the downs of England than the daughters of the Andes. The altitude of nearly ten thousand feet permitted but a slight mantle of stunted grass and no other natural vegetation. Masses of unæsthetic earth, red and brown, appeared in persistent patches, as though the ground were subject to eternal abrasions, to heal which no salutary ointment had been found with the lapse of

time. Among scenes of such unmoving gravity is the former city of the Chibchas placed. The keen breeze from the south was sweeping over the altitudes, chill and piercing. The eucalyptus, the lover of defenceless places, was limited to the valley floor. The clouds were rolling low and throwing their shadows, like forerunners of the night, over the unfurnished stage. Later, from the door of the inn, I looked out over the great plaza. The moon was shining bravely through a curtain of fleeting cumulus. The vast square was deserted. The cathedral and the bishop's palace rose solemn in the pale glow. The town was asleep beneath the vast transcendence of the night.

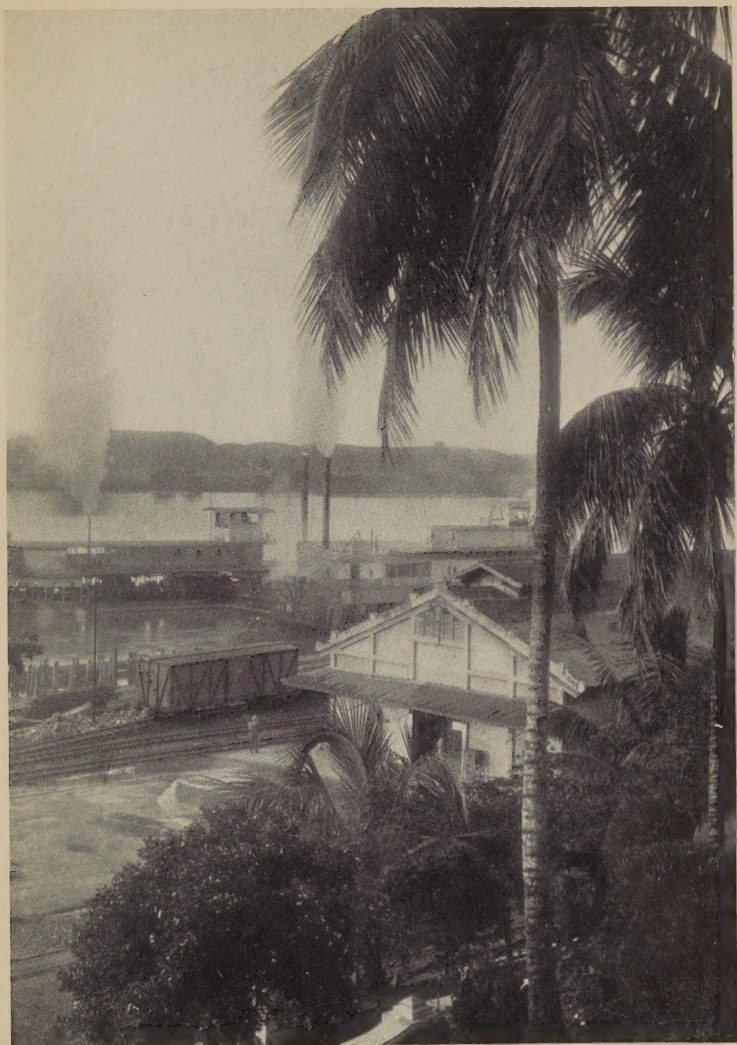
The standard route between Bogotá and the coast is by the River Magdalena, and the journey has been too often described to justify a detailed account. To sum it all up in one breath: you take the train from Bogotá to Girardot, the steamer from Girardot to Beltran, the train from Beltran round the rapids to La Dorada, the steamer from La Dorada to Barranquilla, and the train from Barranquilla to Puerto Colombia, where the liners call. The time occupied is anything from a few days to several weeks on the upstream journey if, as sometimes occurs, the steamer gets impaled on a sandbank. The freight on a ton of goods over this system of communications amounts to about £20. The craft plying on both sections of the river are stern-wheelers, and on May 28th we left La Dorada in one of these at about 6 p.m., bound northwards. The moon had not yet risen. But we had not been under way more than half an hour when we ran on a sandbank with as violent a shock as I have ever felt on a steamer in my life. We were having dinner at the time. The stern end had struck and the ship was tilted up. All the passengers seated at

that end were thrown on the deck, mingled, in delightful but involuntary promiscuity, with their soup, chicken, potatoes, rice, and culinary etceteras. Terrific excitement ensued. Children cried, ladies raved, men rushed to the side, and one gentleman, evidently versed in such experiences, urged us eloquently not to throw ourselves too precipitately into the water as the alligators were innumerable. On mature and profound reflection, being still seated (as I had no children to comfort or ladies to unravel), I concluded that the gentleman's advice, though well-intentioned, was unnecessary, seeing that (1) I had seen in the paper that the average depth of the river at that time was 13 feet, (2) our deck was more than 13 feet above the flat bottom of the craft, (3) as we were on a sandbank the actual depth was probably much less than the said 13 feet. The only contribution, therefore, that I could make to the general chorus was that the cook should be encouraged to throw as much of the dinner as he could as far away as possible on the off side of the ship, so that if we required to swim to the shore the alleged alligators would (a) be engaged elsewhere, (b) conclude, if they had any sense, that having consumed our dinner, we ourselves would be too thin to worry about. This reasoning, however, appeared too complicated for the agitated minds of the community. Eventually we described several circles in the river, allowed ourselves to be assured that no damage had been done, and resumed our journey. Passengers extricated themselves from their dinners, leaving the deck to look as though the weather had been intermittently tempestuous for a fortnight. I got off better than anyone, having craftily selected a seat at the top of a table, so that, whereas I was able to precipitate my soup on to my neighbour's

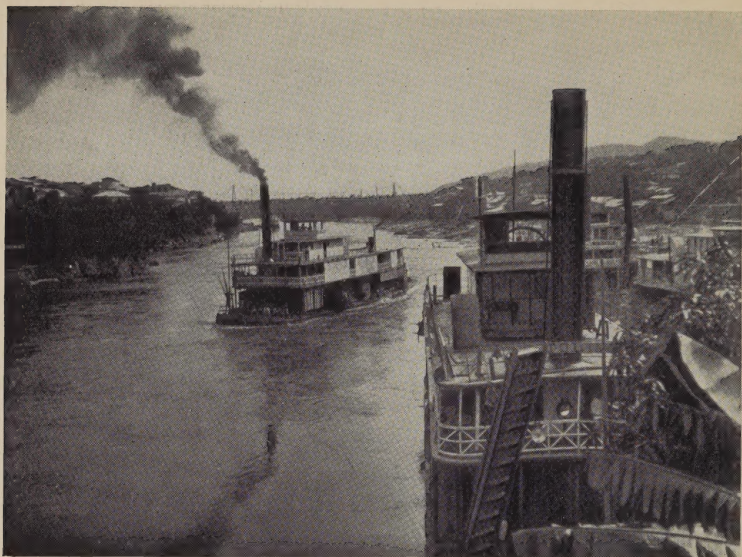
person with no intent of malice, he was unable to reply in the same strain without gravely transgressing the limits of native courtesy.

The enterprising individual whom business, pleasure, perversity, or sentiment leads to Medellin, disembarks at Puerto Berrio and takes the train. All day long, therefore, we travelled through Antioquia. This important department has a population of over 1,000,000, and is the most prosperous, commercially, in the Republic. In spite of the tropical climate the people are energetic, keen, and pushing. This is attributed by some to Hebrew immigrations many generations back, but other experts on the question aver that the broken nature of the country enforces an innate sense of the necessity of struggle. The whole department is hilly in the extreme. The central cordillera here breaks up into multiple ranges of relatively low hills, divided by scores of small tributaries flowing into the Sinu, the Cauca, and the Magdalena. The soil over these hills is generally red and the vegetation fresh and green. Large numbers of trees grow in the valleys. The rainfall is heavy. The altitudes are nowhere high and snow is unknown. Mild coffee, the mainstay of Colombia's economic prosperity, provides the principal line of agriculture. Medellin itself, a city of over 100,000 population, lies in a valley some 5,000 feet above the sea and, owing to its industrial activity, is sometimes called the Manchester of the Republic.

The train took us for some distance over swamps and marshes. The original forest had been depleted, leaving only a few prominent trees and sympathetic palms. Soon we began to climb from the valley of the Magdalena into the hills. The streams were tumbling down in exquisite gorges or over scattered



PUERTO BERRIO



TRANSPORT ON THE MAGDALENA



THE LOWER MAGDALENA

piles of benignant and long-suffering rocks. A small agricultural population was the rule. The divide between the basins of the Cauca and the Magdalena had, at that time, still to be crossed by road. Eastwards we could gaze far away in the direction of the latter river. The curves of the railway were immediately below, and farther down stood the town of Cisneros. The hills hemmed in the valley, and close by a shining streak of water was plunging over precipitous slopes. Westwards a magnificent stretch of country could be envisaged. We were indeed travelling in the realms of gold, for quantities of this metal have been extracted from these hills. But the landscape, in its surface features at least, belonged to the domain of transcendent green. It was a typical panorama of a river valley in Colombia. The light was falling on the waters of a stream winding round within the protection of the hills with corkscrew pertinacity, as though hesitating to pass out into greater immensities or less lovely wastes. A remarkable and heightened sense of scenic perspective was present. Immediately below my point of vantage stood the village of Santiago. Farther away to the north-west another torrent entered, hidden by a spur jutting out into the main depression, which was furrowed and sated with its own profusion of rivulets and glades. Beyond, the slopes led up to a great, green wall, a mountainous and curving amphitheatre of the Andes, the home of myriad inconsequent waters, which closed in the horizon. In the middle distance the rain was stealing through a lateral cleft. A far-off streak of sheen, like a silken cord, lay over the remoter hills and denoted the presence of a cascade.

Above Medellin is a statue of the Saviour, a Christ with the hands upraised to bless. The inscrip-

tion on the base of the monument contains a dedication to 'Jesus Christ, the Leader and Teacher of the World'. The city lies in the hollow of a valley running north and south, resting on the slopes of the eastern hills, gently inclined towards the level floor. Medellin shows an absence of insulting corrugated iron, cold, modern, and depressing. The red roofs, with their curved tiles, look clean and ancestral, harmonizing with the soil of the hills around. A variety of churches stamp the place with the inevitable seals of ecclesiasticism. The new cathedral, built with bricks, is gradually rising to dominate all. Medellin of the Antioqueños is the product of those three inexorable necessities which, according to Victor Hugo, have shaped all human progress: religion, society, and nature, mastered again by that supreme *ἀνάγκη*, the human heart. The two confronting rows of hills which enclosed the valley were essentially similar. The intensely broken surface, the indents and contours, not only contributed to variety in themselves, but broke up the flooding sunlight into a thousand gradations of shade and brilliance. The ridges and curves seemed to belong to the frame of a skeleton beneath, to which the long-suffering and moulded flesh clung with reluctant agony. Northwards, a low rise was but the prelude to a drop into a depression running east and west, which was confined, in its turn, by the dying spurs of the Andes. The red soil was damp and fresh after the rain. Dark and extensive woods mediated between the soft greens and the browns. There was a sense of richness and of the lavish wealth of baronial fields, of a land made palatine by right of creation. To the south the valley was wider, filled with resources for the farmer and decked out with the same interplay of rural and sylvan elements. In the

shadow and the sunshine the fields bordering on the central stream appeared like a pilgrim's rest. This region, never a child of extremes, has yet begotten much pious fanaticism among the ranks of its society. Religion, therefore, staring with mock grandeur through the eyes of speechless effigies, watching in a hopeless indifference over the tombs of the faithful in the cemetery outside the town, was once more crying in revolt against Nature herself.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SPANISH MAIN

AMONG the succession of names which summon from the memory the pictures delineated in *Westward Ho!*, Cartagena de Indias has no rival in historic interest. The city, founded in 1533, was one of the first to rise into importance on the mainland of South America, and rapidly became a place of fame and repute. It was the goal of almost every pirate and buccaneer who sailed for the Spanish Main. As a consequence the King of Spain ordered the massive walls and forts to be constructed at the immense cost of 60,000,000 pesos. It was attacked successfully by Drake in 1586 and the British admiral extorted a ransom of £28,000 from the terrified inhabitants. In 1697 it was captured by the French, who obtained more than £1,000,000. Admiral Vernon, in 1741, with a fleet of thirty ships of the line and ninety other vessels, failed in a similar assault. The Inquisition reigned here, and it is to-day the seat of an archbishopric. The place is really on a low, sandy island separated from the mainland by two narrow and winding channels, the Boca Grande and the Boca Chica, which meet behind the town. After the attempt of Admiral Vernon the Boca Grande was blocked up, and to-day only the Boca Chica is available for ships. The harbour is deep and secure. The town was one of the first to declare for independence, but subsequently succumbed to a terrible siege. For her bravery she

received from Bolívar, the Liberator, the title of 'the Heroic City'. All the waves and billows of fortune have thus passed over her. During the whole of the colonial period Cartagena was a *plaza fuerte*, and one of the best fortified towns in both Americas. To capture her was undoubtedly an enterprise of no mean difficulty.

While I was in Cartagena the annual procession of Candelaria took place, one of the most celebrated and picturesque features of the ecclesiastical life of the place. Walking one night through the narrow streets I became aware of music. Presently a band filed past. Behind the band came the devotees in two lines, one following each side of the street. The girls were in front. Each carried a candle in her hand, each was clothed in a white veil. It was such an exhibition as the populace love to behold in public places, and indeed was pretty to watch. In the close tropical night there was no breath of air moving in the imprisoned streets and alleys to disturb the unresistant flames. There were 540 participants carrying candles, of whom 387 were girls and young women. The band disappeared round a distant corner and the procession, in the pale and flickering light, seemed like the passing of incarnate spirits. Some of the señoritas were beautiful, some were earnest and sad, and some smiling and passing remarks. Others with the desperate persistence born of unreasoning discipline were endlessly repeating the conventional prayers. The music and the silence mingled together to create the atmosphere of the mysteries of the sanctuary. The onlookers immediately fell on their knees when the group of priests followed, escorting the 'San-tissimo', or Host, covered by a golden canopy and lost in a cloud of incense. A military band and a

column of troops brought up the rear. The procession entered the Dominican church and the candles were deposited by the altar.

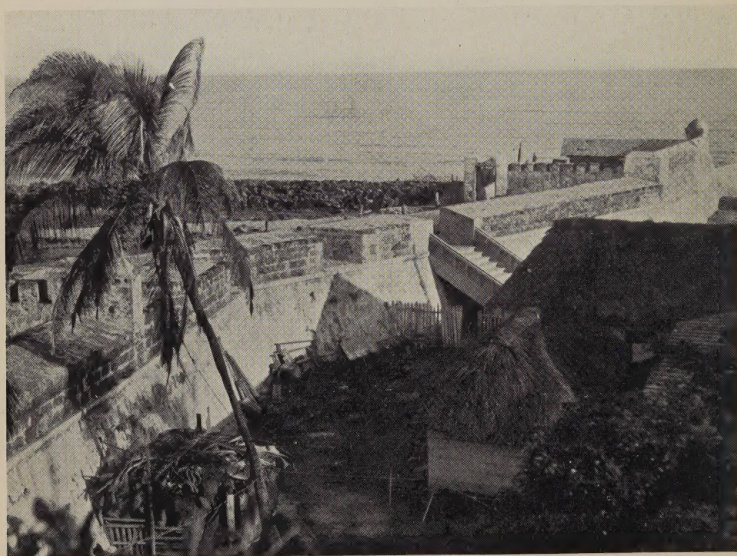
After the crowd had passed I found my way down a little pottering lane to the great walls. Stumbling up the broken steps, I sat down on the rough stones on the top. I was on the outskirts of the city and it was night. In front stretched 20 yards of beach. I found a tunnel under the wall and went down over the white sand to where the water was lapping against the rude coral blocks, and then returned to my point of vantage. In the welcome dark the garbage which generally pollutes a tropical shore could not be detected. Once again, here were the margins of the Atlantic. The curtains of the north had been raised and the Great Bear was hanging thirstily over the sea. The Pole Star was low and solitary. Vega was in the east, Capella and the great Pentagon high in the north-west, Arcturus near the zenith. The young moon, a day old, had sunk already into her diurnal grave, timid as becoming her tender age. A faint gleam was hanging over the horizon and a dark streak of cloud crowned the sea. The lightning flooded the orient in sheets of shimmering and liquid brilliance. A single meteor leisurely crossed the northern spaces, and a lonely light was shining over the water. The waves of the Caribbean, white and tireless, fretted among the coral blocks, reluctant to break the moving calm. The sea still held her strange appeal, her ever-freshening charm. Never pausing yet never tired, this time she was apparently as stilly as the fair spaces reflected in her depths; as when Drake stole up by night and seized the city in the darkness. It was pleasant to exchange the slow, sad music of humanity for the never-wearying notes of Nature.



THE CATHEDRAL, CARTAGENA



"TURRETS, OLD IN STORY"



CASTLES OF THE CARIBBEAN

for the sweet silence of the stars. The cool breeze was coming from the east on the wings of the night. Behind were the tawdry lights, the movies, the saloons and the bars of men whose lives contrasted with the makers of these historic forts, whose deeds were dimensional as the gods'. By the time I returned to my hotel the city was beginning to seek anew the calm and immanence of night.

The next morning I was up betimes, and walked along the walls in the cool of the day. They were dotted with little turrets and pierced with mysterious tunnels. In some places they were narrow, but in others broad enough to have allowed a double line of traffic each way. On the beach were a line of little wooden huts where crowded families were living. The city has long since broken through her artificial boundaries and now has many outlying suburbs. The coco-nut palm is the principal evidence of vegetation. The walls have had to be pulled down in places to allow for the exigencies of modern building programmes. They are constructed of blocks of coral, squared and set in a kind of mortar or cement made out of the soil of the neighbourhood and said to be unusually strong. The intermediate spaces are filled up with rubble and stones. For some portions bricks have been used. One of the most interesting sections is that known as the Bóvedas. The walls are here at their broadest and supported on a series of arches. In the cavernous dens underneath, British sailors were once imprisoned, and they served as a penitentiary until recently. At present they provide shelter for the poor. On walking over these extraordinary works of defence, round the turrets and through the tunnels, it became easy to realize that it required more than strategy to capture the city. It became

easy to picture the unhappy days of old, the anxious families within, the straining eyes searching the horizon for an enemy sail. Over to the east I followed the defences down to the Boca Grande. The heavy, rusty cannon, for which a privateer sailing against the town must have proved a common target, are now lying in forlorn abandon. Amid the litter on the torrid beach and in the languid alley-ways the vultures scavenge with incessant persistence.

To the south-east of the town stands a hill about 300 or 400 feet high known as La Popa. La Popa has a commanding appearance even from a distance. It slopes up gradually from the east, resembling an inclined plane, but on the sides facing the city it reveals a perpendicular and unexpected drop. A motor-road has been constructed to the summit for tourists, and many smiling gentlemen speaking Jamaican English will hasten to assure you of their capability to take you there on four wheels for the trifling sum of £1 or even less. But for the sake of meditation it seemed preferable to walk. On the top of the hill were the remains of an old fort, a little church, and a single house. The view extended all around that strange horizon. In the first invasion of the region it is said that the Indians hurled themselves down these cliffs rather than witness the conquest of their last ancestral refuge. I stood in the welcome shade of the church from which, over the centuries, scores have sallied forth from worshipping a God who has required mercy rather than sacrifice. Looking over the rampart wall of the crumbling fort into the west, the lagoons of the outer harbour lost themselves in a steaming, unhealthy haze. The stillness of the morning was on the water. The Boca Chica wound in from the open sea, and a silver-sided steamer of the Fruit Company

was entering, as the galleons of old used to make their way, slowly to the anchorage. The lakes ramified and spread out behind the town till they were absorbed into the embrace of mortiferous marshes, their alluring beauty made terrible by stagnancy. The low swamps, transformed by distance to seem the bearers of a falsely inviting peace, came up to the margin of the houses. Away in the north stretched the immense Atlantic, at one with the azure heavens, equatorial and blue. Along its shores rose Cartagena, the Venice of the Caribbean, espoused irrevocably to the everlasting sea. The devious channels of the Boca Grande almost washed the base of the legendary walls. The houses were white and proud in the centre, while on the outskirts modern bungalows were being built. In the suburbs the innumerable coco-nut palms bent over the narrow streets. Below, in the foreground, rose the massive fort of San Felipe, contrasting with the two great wireless masts and a black and secular factory chimney. Three ships rode at anchor in the bay.

Such was Cartagena de Indias, Cartagena of the Caribbean, goal of the pirate, hope of the defender, heroic, loyal, brave! Yet the ghastly Inquisition had leered over innocent bones within those walls, impudent and unashamed. This famous city is still the queen of the Caribbean, the Carthage of the south which many have laboured to destroy but have spent their strength in vain. She is the home of men whose lives were written in lines of intensity and death, whose form was of granitic texture. She is a Troy without a Homer, where the greatness of Spain and the greatness of America meet and mingle, where only the forgotten Indian is denied a monument in the immortal flesh of marble and of bronze.

The creeping clouds were already rising from the

marshes and dotting the sky. Every church and every house by the water-side contemplated its double in those sleeping depths. On the outer waves a single sail alone troubled the unruffled blue. To the east was the morning haze, clinging low, loath to be chased afar. The fleecy mists of damp seemed to mount and spread over the firmament and disappear. A great lagoon was cut off from the sea on this side by a strip of encircling sand. The tidal beach held prisoner the pent-up pools. Low, tropical vegetation invaded the foreshore. Back of the coast lay the dank and steaming marshes, the silence of great and dangerous leagues. A solitary vulture was soaring overhead.

On the summit of La Popa is a small cross with an inscription of which this is a rough translation:

The Hope that lives through Him who died
Was consummated on a tree
Where He who makes the blind to see
Like a thief was crucified.
Let us who have our love denied
Bow before this Cross and call
On Him who made the evil fall,
And gave the good the gift excelling.
To dwell for ever near His dwelling,
The Author of creation's all.

Jan. 1881

I came down from La Popa and went over the fort of San Felipe, a remarkable structure. Down below was a maze of underground passages and dungeons. These were blocked up during the War of Independence, but they are now being reopened. Once lost, it would be a matter of patience to find the way out again unassisted, and it is said that there is a tunnel passing right under the town. Several historical treasures have been found during the present excavations. Incalculable labour must

have been spent upon these works, and multitudes of defenceless lives consigned to slavery and death. The fort was constructed by the Negroes brought from Africa, and hundreds are stated to have been killed, so as to reduce the risk of treachery on the part of those who might know the secrets of the defences. Thus perish the nameless multitudes, the strictly and rigorously anonymous crowds, the various gradations of the pariah, who live in all centuries on the margin of life, under conditions which would mean sudden death to more civilized man.

The town itself is full of interest. The market is down by the small boat harbour, and here are to be caught intimate pictures of the life of the people. Of the churches, that of San Pedro Claver is the oldest and most impressive. It was founded in 1603, and shelters the remains of the saint, who was canonized in 1888. San Pedro Claver was a Christian of the kind that has become too rare. He ministered during the early seventeenth century to the thousands of wretched serfs who were sold upon these coasts. He styled himself the 'slave of the slaves' and was called by others the Apostle of the Negroes. He is said to have baptized 200,000 of these people during his life, as well as 'a great quantity of Moors, English, and other heretics'. The former house of the Inquisition is in the centre of the city. On the first floor were the cells of the imprisoned, and a door on the second opens into the death-chamber. In the cathedral can be seen the grating on which the recalcitrant was purged by means of a slow fire. The streets of Cartagena are narrow and old-fashioned. The balconies of the Spanish houses lean over and almost seem to touch each other. You will stumble upon sections of the old walls in all sorts

of unexpected corners, and suddenly find yourself passing through the massive entrances. Modern erections are rising in the centre, and the sight of them provokes sad reflections. The Cathedral of Rheims and the Cloth Hall of Ypres went in war, but the walls of Cartagena are disappearing by the inexorable demands of dollar-governed peace. To see the new many-storied office buildings in the North-American style is like hearing a prayer interrupted by a blasphemy, a poem by a cruel oath, or witnessing the disorbitation of a planet. Men of Spain raised them, men of England stormed them, men of America defended them. Only the men of the dollar and the pound will destroy them. When such events are in the womb of Futurity, it is hard to repress a desire that she should lack the strength to bring forth. But these things must be, and indeed, in such countries, can only produce the ultimate good when sentiment and sorrow have intoned their final dirge.

CHAPTER XXII

OIL !

TRAVELLERS to Maracaibo from abroad must generally call or tranship at Curaçao. The island has increased enormously in prosperity since the oil production of Venezuela has sprung into being. Nearly all communication with the western state of the Republic passes through this colony of the Dutch West Indies. Wilhelmstad, the capital and port, is a place of some 20,000 people. We entered the harbour at dawn on July 14th. The ship steams slowly up a narrow channel through the coral reefs on which the place is built. The channel is only about 100 yards in width, and it is closed at the entrance by a traffic bridge which joins the sections of the town which lie on either side. The bridge floats on twelve double-ended pontoons. At one end is an engine working a drum or winch, round which is coiled a stout wire cable, attached, apparently, to the shore. To all seeming it is a cumbrous arrangement. When a steamer wants to enter there is a furious blowing of whistles and scuttling of tardy transients on to terra firma. The engine then clanks ponderously and, by means of the cable arrangement, hauls the bridge round till it lies up and down the river, the other end serving as a hinge. It is really not a bridge but a maritime gate, pure and simple. Two cents are extracted from those desirous of crossing, but only the most patient can wait if once the contraption

has begun its journey into a far country, and 'pirate' motor-boats offer conveyance at five cents.

The passenger steamers come up alongside the wharfs lining this narrow channel. Farther up is a sharp bend, and beyond, they told me, was the real harbour. There was no sign of it from where we disembarked, but subsequently I climbed a hill behind the town, and then I saw and understood. The interior basin was stretching away to the east, a magnificent sheet of water, ramifying into bays and lakes, surrounded by white and coral shores. The shadows lay over it or the sunlight peeped through as the wind swept the clouds across the skies. It was wellnigh landlocked, evidently deep, and it could have sheltered a navy between its margins. But not a palm was fringing its beaches, nor did a tree of consideration raise its head above the common crowd. Curaçao is not of that favoured class. The soil is stubborn and dry, the rainfall slight, the wind constant and dusty. The island is covered with a low, xerophilous vegetation of thorny trees and cacti, which is in the same class as the intermediate lands between the coast of Peru and the higher Andes, or as the valley of the Marañon at Balsas and Jaen. Blocks of broken coral, composing the ground surface, compete with the thorns to make walking difficult, at least for the unshod. Low hills sloped up gradually from the north and west, and fell precipitously on the south and east; as though the island rose to contemplate its own exiguous scantiness, and then, with eyes open to see the shame of its poverty, dropped suddenly into barren silence. The inner harbour connected with the sea by the narrow channel in which the passenger steamers were moored. The town, roofed in red and white, was huddled round the entrance.



THE BÓVEDAS



A CORNER OF CARTAGENA



THE ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOUR, CURAÇAO



CURAÇAO

Beyond was the Caribbean, an ocean white-whipped by the keen north-east winds, immense and wild as that other waste—the desert.

But here was not needed beauty! Here was an emporium of commerce. On the north side of the interior basin was a forest of black chimneys, adorning monuments more beautiful to many than the imperial grace of an avenue of palms. A multitude of domes, like reservoirs of gas, stood one behind the other in the distance. It was a town of tanks like the great oil centres of Mexico and Texas. Several of the big companies have their refining plants here, and the oil is re-exported in 10,000- or 12,000-ton ships. The West India Oil Company's plant was in the foreground. Tucked into this odd corner of the Indies was the wealth of the mighty, a possible weapon for unwritten abuse, and at the same time the greatest material benefice potential of the world. The wind was carrying racing trails of black smoke across the houses and the hills. Curaçao was clearly a dominion of the dollar, an apotheosis of the unæsthetic. Fifty-six nationalities are found among the population, languages and money of any denomination, recognized or unrecognized, seemed to pass as currency. Here was the riffraff of the nations, a *bureau de change* of vapid humanity, the Sargasso Sea of the unfortunate. Here Nature and men alike were hard; that smoke the sole achievement of lives consumed for many in tragedies; the bare coral rocks, the naked stones of fate.

The channel leading into the Maracaibo 'lake' passes close to the Peninsula de la Goajira. This was not the first I had seen of this peculiar piece of land, but though uninteresting to many, it always had a singular fascination for me. For here on the

outskirts of a continent, hemmed around on three sides by the encircling ocean, in an arid and repellent environment, live the Goajiro Indians, perhaps about 15,000 strong. They belong to the Arawak family, scattered originally over the entire region from central Brazil to Florida. Driven out of the forest by their enemies the Caribs, the Goajiros were forced into the extremest refuge available to them, while in the hills on the borders of their territory live the Motilons, still savage and untamed. The passage over the bar follows close along the shore, and the breaking waves were clearly audible. The water was a greenish yellow colour. On the peninsula itself the low dunes receded into the distance. A scanty vegetation clung to them, swept by the winds and scorched by the remorseless sun. In the background was a group of unimpressive hills. It is an inhospitable country, and the Indians often suffer from scarcity or drought. The beach stretched endlessly away in yellow and burning leagues. There were no habitations visible, but signs of life could be detected, and presently a solitary individual came into view urging two donkeys along the water's edge. Close by the village of San Carlos, which consisted of a few hamlets, the pilot came aboard. On the opposite side of the channel was the island of Zapara, a mere oasis of sand, if it is permitted to reverse the common use of the term, amid a desert of broken and sickly-looking waters. On its southern shore were a few Indian huts built partially in the lake. Once over the bar the water gets fresher and fresher, and is only slightly brackish at Maracaibo. Twenty-one tankers passed going in the opposite direction, each loaded down to the last legitimate inch. Presently the coast-line receded again, and became a grey streak in the distance.

The petroleum industry dominates the commercial situation in Venezuela, and has been of incalculable value to the country. The proceeds accruing to the Government have permitted the construction of public works and roads, and the circumstances have led to a phenomenal increase in the population of Maracaibo, especially in the period of 1926-27. The existence of oil round the basin of the lake has been known since 1913, but exploitation on the extensive scale did not really commence till 1922, when a single well in the La Rosa field afforded 1,000,000 barrels in nine days, and every year now sees a fresh expansion of the business. Within an astonishingly brief period Venezuela has risen to the second place in the oil production of the countries of the world. The field lies all around the lake, and boring takes place within the waters themselves. It is said that in 1928 every day, on an average, saw twenty-six 3,000-ton tankers leaving for Curaçao and Aruba, where the refining plants are. For the benefit of those who revel in statistics, perhaps it would be well to state that in 1928 the production of crude petroleum was 15,667,000 tons, and in 1929 it is estimated as having reached 19,300,000 tons.

The town is rapidly becoming the modern city of business. Enormous activity has followed the petroleum developments. The streets are full of motors, and the shops stocked with every variety of imported goods. Living as a whole is not expensive in Venezuela, but it has risen in this section to absurd levels. Maracaibo will only tolerate the best of everything. There is little of historic value and no notable architecture in the place. Perhaps the most interesting part is the water-front. Here innumerable canoes of the heaviest and crudest type

jostle along the quayside and unload their wares. They pole to and fro through the shallow water, and bump into one another with unreflecting savagery. The larger sailing-boats, each of them of cumbrous proportions and with bulwarks like a battleship, embark passengers and goods to the utmost limit of the space available, for transport to distant points on the lake. Fruits and vegetables of all tropical categories are here and many cages of captive birds. On the outskirts, the residences of the wealthy are rising. The country is of the same uniform character all around, the soil supporting only an indifferent, dry vegetation, bearing every evidence of insufficiency of pluvial refreshment.

The Cordillera Oriental of Colombia passes down that country, northwards from Bogotá till it reaches the Nudo de Pamplona, close to the Venezuelan frontier, where it divides. One branch continues to the north, and forms the boundary between the two republics. It passes about 50 miles west of Maracaibo, still maintaining altitudes of 10,000 feet and higher. It is known as the Sierra de Perijá and in it live the Motilon Indians, of whom little is known, and who do not welcome the stranger into their territory. This branch terminates in the Peninsula de la Goajira. The other range strikes off north-east and passes through Venezuela, where it bears the name of the Sierra Nevada, or Cordillera, de Merida. The Maracaibo lake is, as it were, fitted into the angle between these two ranges. The Sierra Nevada de Merida has, as its name implies, several peaks which are covered with perpetual snow, of which the highest is La Columna, 16,523 feet. It terminates in the State of Lara. There are several ways of reaching the cordillera from Maracaibo, but the route which I followed finally brought me to San

Cristóbal, an important town of 15,000 people in the extreme west of the Republic. The lake steamer is taken to Encontrados on the River Catatumbo, the railway from there to Tachira, whence there is a motor-road to San Cristóbal.

We left Maracaibo at 8 p.m., and the night was close. The lights of the city gleamed across the water. On the far side could be seen the glow from the oil camps, like the luminous glare over a metropolis. A few sailing-boats were making for home. The lightning in the west filled the spaces of the sky and illuminated the solemn clouds. We slept on deck, and by next morning were already near the mouth of the Catatumbo. The contrast between the muddy waters of the river and the olive green of the lake was definite and unmistakable. We crossed the bar in 5 feet of water and just inside drew up to the land. Beyond the far bank was another lake, partially the creation of recent rain. In the middle of it stood a village of appreciable size, built on piles and entirely cut off by the floods. All day long we continued upstream through low country of alternating marsh, forest, and plain. The sunset was a remarkable sight. During the afternoon the clouds over the Andes in the south began to take definite shape. They rose in a great mass like the mountains they covered. Mostly grey, they terminated in vast and abysmal precipices of white. Tunnels seemed to penetrate into the heart of the formation as if hidden railways and roads sapped the centres of an immense civilization, compared with which this of our insignificant planet was but a child's model. As so often in tropical cloud displays, halls and palaces presented their mysterious and awesome portals. The central part or body was a level neutral tint, showing a regular summit like the floor of a

nubilous and lofty plateau. A fleecy line of grey ascended from the highest point, seeming to suggest that, from the cities of the imagination, the columns of an army of unlimited thousands were marching forth to new and loftier conquests in undiscovered and still more spacious skies. At the eastern end dark and impregnable castles took the place of a rearguard. It was a fantasy of toil, the architecture of an angel. Finally, a white tower of defence surmounted all, a pillar of cloud guarding but a cloud, watching with anxious and unremitting care the ephemeral yet constant crown of the Andes. The sun set behind the forest, invisible to me. But the clouds watched that familiar scene, bathed in a solemn red, pensive for their own dissolution and that of another day. Everything in the west was lurid and grave. The elements, it was easy to believe, were consumed with fervent heat; the clang of arms and the blood of the conquered were represented in symbol there. An arc of colour rose in majesty, and streaks of orange and purple searched the sky in hopeless glory for some resting-place for a brief hour. The portals of the southern clouds were lit with a thousand golden lamps. In the east, the counterlight was like the traditional rays of the sun himself. Six great avenues of pink and purple sprang from the orient, branching out over the heavens till they conquered the zenith itself. The wisps of cirrus were touched with a magician's finger and infused with colour. All around in heaven and earth seemed clothed in a strange and wild beauty. That restless search for harmony and peace was faced with the ever-recurring revolt against rhythm and order. And this time the perpetual conflict was staged amid the wildness of the deserted moor, and in the presence of the silence



TANKERS ENTERING MARACAIBO



LAKE MARACAIBO



THE TRANSANDINE ROAD



A BRIDGE IN THE ANDES

of the forest and the deep sorrow of the lake and marsh.

In Tachira I found a lorry leaving for San Cristóbal. The climb into the Andes began immediately outside the little town. The roads were dry, and evidently but little rain had fallen. All the glory and variety of the lower slopes were there, so different from the crowning uniformity of the summits. The tropical forest was merging into the plain, the straight white trunks standing out, the branches bowing in the afternoon breeze. Coarse, silver-headed grasses bent and waved before the wind. Looking back, the forest, the rivers, and the lake were one in an immense sea of distance, grey and bereft of visible detail, lost in the heat of the Caribbean coast. On crossing a preliminary ridge the steeper hills came into view. Varied forest and plain competed for supremacy. The cordillera was on an ample and munificent scale, like all the branches of the Andes. The hills were folded and twisted, the children of Nature, subject apparently to inexorable laws, yet born (to use a phrase of Unamuno's), as children often are, in protest against their father. The mind of a mathematician did not create this. As we followed up the winding road the hill-sides became bare like the Altiplano of Bolivia. But no littleness could live there, no petty orders, no card of rules, no complexes, no trivialities. The truants had broken from the school and matured, in the act, into ripened age. A unique spirit of genius equipped with tools to dwarf the marvels of modern machinery could not have formed this. Far below was a stream in a profound valley running down to the Maracaibo lake. The rain swept over the heights, and a mountain rainbow formed before us, one end on the floor of the valley, the

other on the steepening slopes. As we drew near the triumphal arch moved across the road and fled majestically into the distance.

San Cristóbal is the capital of a state and stands at 2,500 feet above the sea. The best idea of the surrounding country can be gained from the heights on which the wireless station is built. Standing here, it is not difficult to see that the Venezuelan Andes, though they may not reach such towering proportions, are in no way inferior to the Colombian cordilleras for beauty and variety of scenery. The stage of reality was here stranger and more glorious than the fancied settings of fiction. Dead words and the exacting camera could never interpret that living, breathing landscape. In the dark and rainy distance of the south rose the bulk of the sierra rent by mysterious valleys, the mother of wooded glades nestling like children in its bosom. It was crowned by Nature's choicest wreath, the sunlit clouds, lifting now and again to reveal a peep of the highest slopes. San Cristóbal lay below, the white cathedral in one corner, the sombre-tiled houses all around. It stood on a slope of the hills, with its steep and cobbled streets and the farawayness of a small mountain town. Asleep or awake, it was watched by the ceaseless change of the heavens, nursed by Nature's immemorial guardians, the mountains and the streams, the woods and the valleys, and circled about by the green of rain-kissed pastures and the nascent acres of the season of fertility. The shadows of the cumulus, swept by the Andean winds, reckless, refreshing, and rude, passed over the land. In the valley below ran the stream sparkling in the silvery afternoon light. Here, too, was the murmur of waters passing ever onward to the Orinoco and the infinite sea beyond. A great mass of near-by hills flanked

the valley in the west. Little precipices and bare rocks revealed themselves shyly, small nooks and hollows invited a lazy reconnaissance. Young eucalyptuses stood proudly like lovely poplars, under the scornful majesty of the white-trunked tropical giants. Royal palms which had been planted in clumps were stately and dignified even against the sweep of the mountain-side. In the north was the recession of gradual slopes, and to the east and immediately above, the sharp rise to the brow of the hills on which the town stood, and then the clouds again resting on the summits, menacing and full-swollen, overpowering and white.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE VENEZUELAN ANDES

THE chief accomplishment of the present administration in Venezuela has been the construction of roads suitable for motor traffic. With the existence of large quantities of petroleum in the country, cheap communications have thus become possible. Many of these roads which traverse the llanos watered by the affluents of the Orinoco are only negotiable in the dry season. But the principal artery is the 'Gran Carretera Transandina' or Transandine Road. This runs from Caracas to the Colombian frontier, a distance of 800 miles. In the western part of the Republic it follows the extremely narrow valley dividing the two ranges of the Cordillera de Merida, or Venezuelan branch of the Andes. In this region considerable engineering skill has been required to render the gradients and surface suitable for continued use. On July 31st, therefore, I left San Cristóbal for Merida, the capital of the state of that name, and the first stage of importance on the road to Caracas. The journey was made in what is delicately termed an 'autobus' in those parts. The vehicle consists of a converted lorry, the regeneration being effected by placing a bench behind the driver's seat. First-class passengers sit on this bench. Second-class unfortunates squeeze themselves between the cargo in the rear of the lorry and the roof. I considered myself justified in acquiring a first-class ticket,

being therefore unsqueezed except in a lateral direction by my fellow-passengers. We climbed out of the San Cristóbal basin and commenced to ascend the cleft between the two ranges of the cordillera. The road followed the side of the valley at varying elevations above its floor. The slopes were green and cultivated where the steepness permitted. The planting of the eucalyptus has become popular in these parts of recent years, and the young members of the species were attractive and graceful. Isolated trees, typical of the climate and altitude, stood alone in solemn pensiveness. The mountains rose into the mist on either hand. The hill-side villages were clean and neat. There were no distinctive groups of Indians wearing their own dress and speaking their own language, but the whole population was evidently largely of Indian origin, and the names of now extinct tribes are preserved in much of the local village toponymy.

After crossing one or two ridges we stopped in a large village known as La Grita. From here we began a long upward climb. Presently we passed into a small level plain among the hills, hidden between the slopes and summits from the outside world. Wheat was growing side by side with maize in yellow and happy fields. Scattered little farms shared the soil between them. Looking down the immense cleft of the cordillera, the final view was lost in the distance. The hills seemed to be folded over each other, pushing out into the valley with impudent persistence, striving to meet across the spaces from opposite sides. They were half-concealed in the mist, and like the bulwarks of a fog-bound ship, the larger ridges alone were visible. Meanwhile the evening drew on. The clouds began to form in the valleys, climbing up to follow the shadows, the

creations of their own being. They seemed to absorb space itself, filling silently the emptiness around, blotting out the views, blanketing the little farms. Damp and chill, heavy-edged and threatening, they were the forerunners of the mountain night. Presently, on a glance downwards, it was a mass of whiteness that had supplanted the distance. Brooding no denial, they had taken the valleys for their own, ignoring all protest and despising all resistance. Rising to higher ambitions yet, they swept over the road, crushing each other or fleeing before a breath of wind. Still they lay in the valley like a mighty coverlet of snow, albeit warm and full of comfort. The contemplation of such a scene gives a sense of ethereal aboveness. Seated, as it were, in supreme heights, you saw the processes of Nature's diurnal unfoldings and you understood. The peaks of the mountains alone detached themselves above the downy mass in stark isolation, disdaining such cowardly protection, hungry for prominence, proud to personalize their being, eager to contemplate their unaided victory. Higher up, when we stopped at an inn, the last tinges of glory from a hidden sun were in the sky. We were overlooking a gorge, engulfing, dark, and threatening. The great banks of white were merging into grey. The last, loving light was fading behind the hills. In the northern spaces the Great Bear twinkled into being, but there was an icy coldness in the southern stars. We continued the journey, crossing the *páramo* or mountain waste at 10,000 feet, the measureless covering vault above rivalled by the spaces below, silent and unknown. After resting at Tovar we were on the road again at 4.30 a.m. Venus was a morning star, full, soft, and patient, and Orion was in the sky. Presently came the yielding of night.

Dawn was abroad in the valleys of the Andes, wild and grand. We followed down a river-bed, and the country began to undergo a rapid change. Here it was dry and barren, like the valley of the Rio Grande in Bolivia. The cactus and the thorny acacia were the principal trees or plants. No grass or herbs were growing. The soil was reddish and stony, and a clay-coloured stream was rushing over a bed of pebbles, finally to empty into the Maracaibo lake. At last we reached the town of Merida, a place of about 8,000 people, at 5,000 feet above the sea, boasting several churches, an archbishop, and a small university.

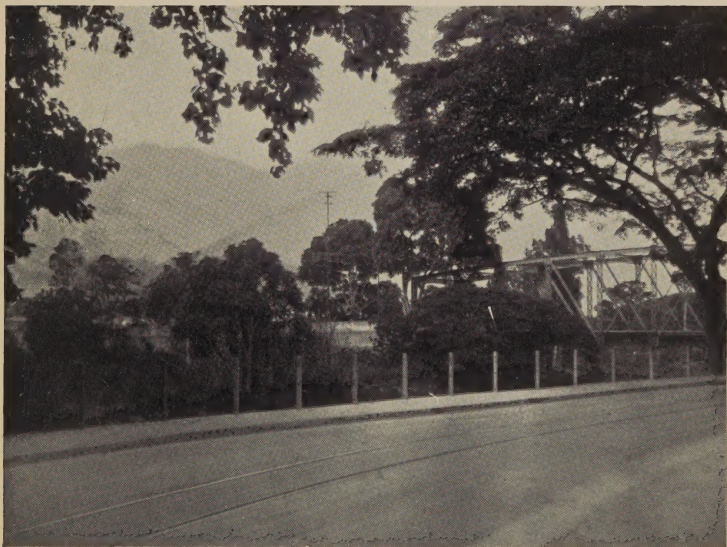
Merida has reached the limit of her urban expansion to the east, for there the country is interrupted by an abrupt chasm. From the base of a small monument a stony path winds down the very face of this precipitous cliff. Far below is the meeting of two streams, divided by a spur which stands out immediately opposite the town. The great depth of the valleys and their varied surface once more calls up every memory of mountain vastness. Here the music of the instant and busy water is the harp harmonious in your ears. The lower slopes were forested, contented, and rich, like an old-time feudal estate. The smaller valleys led up to a flat platform of soil among the hills, a level colony of farms. On the bluff opposite was a little white church. A lorry was crawling along the motor-road traced on the hill-side across the intermediate chasm. In the more open spaces were trees and homesteads, wooded spurs and sheltered yellow fields. The hills above climbed into rocky heights, revealing the line of perpetual snow. La Columna and La Concha, which were visible, are said to have an altitude of 16,500 and 16,100 feet respectively. The morning sun was

shining with reluctant hesitancy, while the mists were rising from every haunt of damp. Beauty and grandeur were awake, delicacy and greatness companied with each other. The sweet semi-tropical flowers and the lovely creepers grew at your feet. Beneath and above were the forest, the rocks, and the undefiled snow; in the valley the murmuring and restless stream; on the mountains the everchanging mantle of clouds. Up the wearisome zigzag path a woman was driving a bunch of laden donkeys.

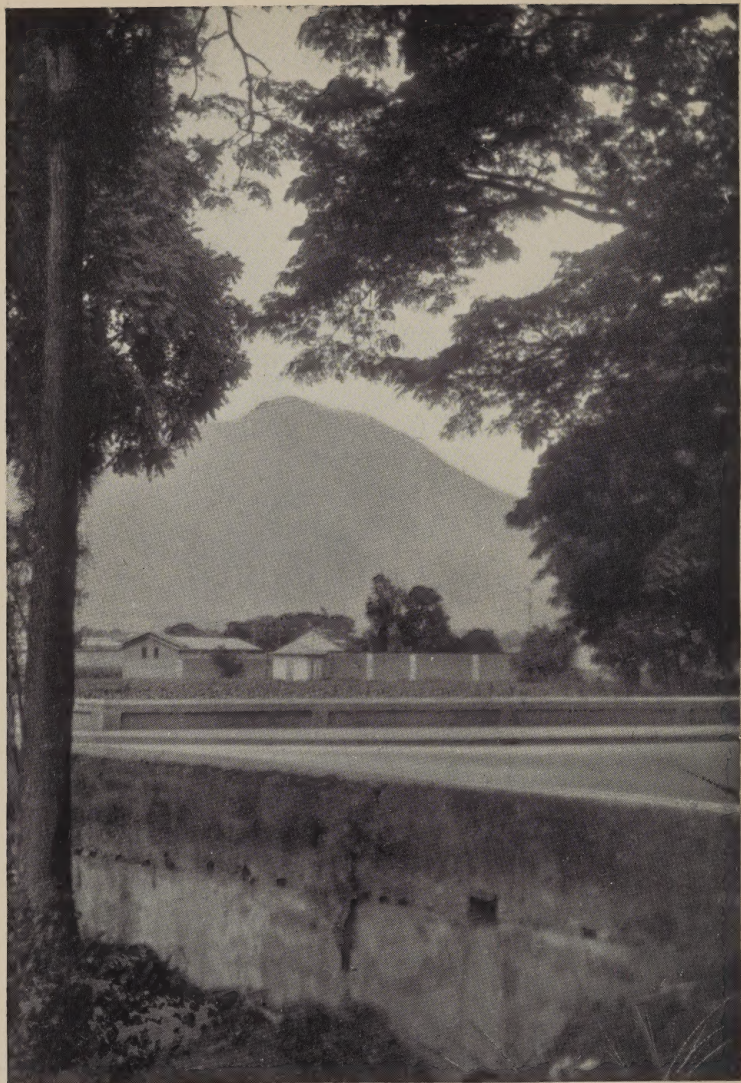
On leaving Merida and passing round the gorge we commenced a long climb. The villages in these hills seemed to share all the blessings of warmth and cold, rain and sun, at one and the same time. The village squares were planted with ravishing flowers and variegated shrubs. Richly coloured roses were as common as the heather on a Scottish moor. A variety of fuchsia was there, growing beneath the palms. Brilliant red blossoms were open on the trees. Venezuela does not belie her reputation for being a land of flowers. But as we climbed higher all this suffered a rapid change. The streams became mountain brooks. The fields and crops gave way to the *páramo*, a desolate waste of coarse grasses, comparable with the surface of the Altiplano of Bolivia. A low but brilliant yellow shrub persisted, however, with unconquerable optimism. A blue vetch still held up its head in irreducible confidence. The reign of stones then supervened and the hill-sides were abandoned to primitive confusion. The people who live in this section were of markedly Indian types and were mostly modern representatives of the former Mucuchies. Their huts were low, exposed, and misery-stricken. Finally we passed into a region where the soil was merely shale and bare earth, with some occasional tufts of coarse grass. A heavy



LA GUAIRA, THE PORT OF CARACAS



ROADS NEAR THE VENEZUELAN CAPITAL



THE "SILLA DE CARACAS" MOUNTAIN

mist blocked out the road completely and we proceeded at a snail's pace, crossing the summit at 13,900 feet. At this point, the highest generally passed in Venezuela, there is a statue of Bolívar, the Liberator of Five Republics.

About 2,000 feet down from the summit the road was blocked. With the recent rains there had been many landslides, and at this point an enormous rock was lying across it. We stopped behind five lorries which had already accumulated on one side. The assembled audience was contemplating the impasse, and I descended and engaged in the same office. No one, however, appeared to be able to contemplate with sufficient calories to remove the obstruction. Meanwhile the company of my companions, by an ingenious process of arithmetic (which never errs), had reached the reassuring conclusion that the rock weighed about a thousand tons. This I did not dispute, as it was possible that the conviction might lead to more earnest and united effort. As a matter of fact, to judge from certain exhibition rocks at seaside places round the coasts of England which are shown to visitors, it probably weighed about a hundred. I do, however, declare and would affirm the same before any notary, public or private, that it was the least diminutive pebble that it has ever yet been my privilege to stumble on, on a King's or President's highway, in any country. Meanwhile various suggestions were in the air. It seemed that the best thing to do would be to wait till some more lorries had accumulated and then, one behind the other, push it down the road to the next hairpin bend and topple it over the edge. But it was difficult to enlist chauffeurs or owners for this plan. On further inspection it appeared that twenty peons under a weedy and fussy little individual were engaged in banking up

the slope to make a road round the lower point of the monster. The weedy individual evidently knew approximately as much about road-making as he did of navigation. A thin and steadfast rain at 11,000 feet served to shelter us all from that Sahara feeling. By 6.30 p.m. the weedy individual (who was by now closely resembling a piece of groundsel, yellow and damp) announced that the road was completed, but on continued and anxious search it was only possible to find an inverted ditch. The first few lorries passed (there were now fifteen on one side and eight on the other), but finally a large one stuck. By no device could the wheels be made to grip the surface, which was a sea of mud, and suddenly half the highway disappeared down the cliff, leaving the vehicle in a dangerous position. The driver got down, gesticulating with terror and enthusiasm, and said that his lorry cost 18,000 Venezuelan *bolívaes*, that it belonged to the Government, and that he would not budge another inch till morning. The real point, however, was whether the road would. The weedy individual said it was all the driver's fault. The driver said that a man with a face like that belonged to the nursery garden (or something equivalent), one of those profound and penetrating observations which always seem to throw true light on a situation. Finally, seeing that no one was likely to do anything till it was too late to get anything done, I scrambled round to the other side and found a man who was going back on the road as far as Valera, and who, for the usual consideration, would be pleased to take me there. Ultimately the lorry was saved, and the rain fortunately held off during the night.

Beyond Valera we drove through a pleasant valley. The hills were low and open, the vegetation

damp and rambling. Presently we crossed a level and extensive plain, characterized by intermittent groups of palms. Passing again between the hills, we came out into a very different region. The Cordillera de Merida, the extreme north-eastern ramification of the Andes, finally disappears here. The country was arid and burnt. There was no grass or green of any kind covering the soil. A forest of great cacti and thorn-bushes had appropriated all the surface around. We drove on through this till we came to the town of Carora, in the middle of a level plain, the northern side of which was comparatively fertile. Beyond Carora was mile after mile of the same arid type. The giant cactus, like a matured but melancholy tree, dominated the waste. The afternoon breeze was hot and comfortless. Animation was stifled, life desiccated and tired. The ground was irregular and undulating, but whether on the summits or in the valleys, the same desolation was invariable. Even the ruins of a stricken Babylon would have seemed a welcome sight. Here the pebbles were round and flat, there the sharp-edged stones and shale occupied every square inch. All was hard, dry, and scorching. Stillness and sorrow were written large. But from time to time we crossed the muddy bottom of a dried-up stream. Around these pitiful oases a few low huts would be gathered. The people were sickly, fevered, and languid, and it was hard to imagine why they lived on there. Even the oxen on the road were thin and hollow-haunched. The land was a land of death. By the roadside was a dying horse. Famished and ghastly, stricken with a lethal rigidity, it stood unmoved while we passed by, the vultures hovering above. Farther on those revellers of the waste were already feasting on some forgotten and decaying

carcase. A lame donkey with the thorns clinging to his shaggy sides limped painfully over the stones to find some merciful patch of pasture. But there is no mercy in such a desert, no trace of relenting. An inexorable spirit reigns in the midst of an empire of havoc, gloating over the vanished life and the harvest of death. Only a single little blood-red songster flew across our track, seeking happier realms, and the shining lizards slipped over the stones. For the rest, the cactus itself stretched upwards to gaze above, finding the shadeless vault more comforting than the desolation around. The rocks and hill-sides seemed, to the imagination, to be joining in a sphinx-like smile, inviting the lost traveller to pause and dig his grave for his own pity and the protection of his mortal remains.

All through northern Venezuela the coast range borders on the sea. It has no obvious connection with the Andes, and stands about 6,000 feet high, rising in places to greater elevations. The road to Caracas, the capital, follows for the most part the slopes of the southern or inland side of these hills, where the incline descends gradually to the plains of the interior. The country is interesting to travel through, and in the wet season green and cheerful. The light of morning and of the late hours of the afternoon is full of softness and beauty. The sun sets often behind a spur of the range, and from such a place of concealment, but with an immense remoteness, rises the glow of unapproachable and dying rays. Such pictures belong to a sphere of glory as indefinable in words as heaven itself. These fair American scenes cannot be made interpretable to a clod, confined to an equation or set out in a row of statistics. Those sunsets pass in a majestic series of transitions from shade to shade of gold and red.



CROSS AND CLOUDS IN VENEZUELA



FLOODS IN THE FOREST



A TYPICAL RIVER BANK

They are incomprehensible, vast, and overawing. The stream of glory lights upon the clouds, making, for a brief moment, the common and transitory the seat of sublimity. It diffuses through the mountain mists, penetrating and filling them in a fluid and pervasive silence. And when it is succeeded by the night, perhaps amid the gloom of the forest, in the chill of the mountain, or on the illimitable and level plain, it leaves in the sensitive mind a solemn and profound conviction of the things which cannot be seen for the glory of that light, an anticipation of that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

CHAPTER XXIV

FORESTS AND PLAINS OF THE ORINOCO

IN the heart of the continent of South America, on the borders of Brazil and Venezuela, rises the Parima mountain range. These mysterious hills still await exploration. The range has never been crossed by any explorer, and the story that the Guaharibo Indians have a trail which leads across from one side to the other is probably nothing more than a fable. Viewed from a distance, the sierra rises like a vast and mist-hidden wall, crossing the country and closing in the view, holding promise of unknown and undiscovered secrets. All around is the endless forest, uncharted, unbroken, uninterrupted, the unchallenged conqueror, the master even of the mountain slopes. Perhaps, while standing on your point of vantage, the hum of some rapid in the river, below which has cost infinite labour to ascend, will be in your ears, a music made melodious only by the distance. Ever ahead, ever in front, stretches the unpenetrated and savage wilderness. On one side of the range are born certain affluents of the River Negro, belonging to the Amazon system, on the other the stream of the Orinoco itself. Of the rivers whose sources have never yet been mapped, the Orinoco is one of the greatest. The French explorer Chaffanjon attempted the ascent, and more recently the well-known explorer Dr. Hamilton Rice. This remote region is dominated by the so-called Guaharibo Indians. In 1763 the Spanish pioneer Francisco

Bobadilla penetrated the territory and his men quarrelled with them. At that time the tribe built a crude bridge over the upper river at a point where it is already very narrow, and claimed the region for their own. This spot, known as the 'Puente de los Guaharibos', has marked the limit of most of the ascents. For many years the Jesuits maintained a mission at Esmeraldas, on the upper Orinoco, and just above the bifurcation of the Casiquiare which links the river with the Amazon system. After the expulsion of the friars the mission rapidly began to sink into oblivion.

At San Fernando de Atabapo the river changes its general direction. This little place of a few hundred people is the centre and metropolis of the Venezuelan interior. In the bloody days when Tomás Funes was governor of the region the atrocities and murders perpetrated in this village made its name famous over the entire area. It was the focus of the rubber trade of the Orinoco forests, and in the books of the little stores accounts of often imaginary debts mounted up against the unhappy Indians and peons who laboured as *caucheros* (rubber-workers) in the forests around. They paid, too often, only with their lives, or died under the very tree whose existence they themselves were slowly sapping. The struggle against the forces of nature arrayed against them, the forest, the rapids, the swamps, and savagery on every hand, was titanic, awful. In San Fernando every knife and every yard of cloth was priced at a small fortune. The peons were sold, passed on, perhaps, would be a more delicate term, from one *patron* to another. The dissolution of the Baré tribe of the Casiquiare took place thus. Year in, year out they served as rowers, raft-men, and canoe-men, on the rivers, separated from their wives,

the same wretches appearing sometimes in Manaos, sometimes in Ciudad Bolivar, only 250 miles from Trinidad. Bitter at heart, all hope extinguished in their breasts, they succumbed, and were swallowed up in what a Colombian writer significantly terms 'La Voragine'—the Whirlpool, a vortex of immeasurable dimensions, by a strange paradox characterized by silent forest and still, mephitic swamp, always dangerous, often fatal, which is none other than the *selva* itself. The timid Maquiritarés of the Ventuari, driven by desperation to revenge, descended one stormy night on the town of San Fernando and slaughtered more than fifty people. But retaliation has availed them but little. They too, already in the twilight of their day, must disappear, drawn under by an inevitable fate. Violence must prosper in these parts, and justice must not be permitted a place. Then the price of rubber fell, the region became deserted anew, and the curtain descended on a long succession of tragedies whose full history can never be recorded.

San Fernando de Atabapo is at the confluence of several rivers. From the south flow down the reddish waters of the Atabapo, from the sources of which there is a convenient portage to the River Negro. From the west comes the yellow flood of the Guaviare or Guayabero, swollen by the Inirida, which enters just above the village. Pouring down from the east and disappearing into the north are the imperial waters of the Orinoco. All around is the forest. In the stretches of the river below San Fernando there are two dangerous sets of rapids, the Atures and the Maipures, but they are constantly passed by the small craft which ply in these parts. On the right bank the forest is still dominant, but in the west, except along the actual margins of the

stream, the llanos or plains begin to appear. The whole of the lower basin is characterized mainly by these llanos. They cover a roughly semicircular area, which encloses all the land between the western and northern tributaries of the Orinoco from the Guaviare round to the Atlantic coast opposite Trinidad. From the Guaviare north to the Meta is a little-known part, and for many the llanos mean principally the land from the Apure to the Guárico, which has as centre and focal point San Fernando de Apure. These plains have witnessed some strange passages of history. Originally many Indian tribes claimed them as their natural habitat, but with the lapse of time and the vicissitudes of fortune they have mostly disappeared. In the seventeenth century the pioneers of the Company of Jesus penetrated these distant solitudes. Of these early missionaries, José Joaquín Ortiz, the Colombian poet, writes: 'One clime and one region was not sufficient for the ardour that inflamed the breasts of the holy disciples of Christ. They will go to enkindle the pure flame of love in the heart of the savage, at the same time teaching him the arts of peace in the immense solitudes which are fertilized by the Arauca, and the Meta and the Casanare, and the torrential Upia. They will scale the ever-precipitous thrones of the deafening storm, and will finally hear the canticle sounding in praise of the redeeming cross in as many tongues and by as many tribes as people my native land from the west to the east.'¹ Across these rough and wearying regions the tyrant Lope de Aguirre wandered, supposedly in search of El Dorado. Federmann, the German, traversed them on his way to Bogotá. Bolívar at a later date led his troops

¹ Quoted in H. J. Mozans, *Up the Orinoco and Down the Magdalena*. New York and London, 1910. P. 155.

in a historic march to the victory of Boyacá by this interior route.

The llanos stretch away before the traveller like an illimitable sea. Green after the rains, they are dry and burnt during the summer. Often small groups of trees or *matas* will be visible at intervals. At other times nothing seems to rise to interrupt the monotony. A cloud of dust appears in the distance, but only an experienced eye can detect if it is some current of wind, or the passing of a herd of cattle. Innumerable streams or *caños* cross these plains, as well as some of the larger tributaries of the Orinoco, which are of by no means despicable volume. Along the banks of the waterways vegetation is generally to be found. Crocodiles and the voracious fish known as *caribes* (in Brazil, *piranhas*) are the common denizens of their depths. When the llano is vast and open, the sun rises like a swollen ball of fire over the level horizon, climbs to noon-day heat, and sets with the same definiteness in the west. Often the expert eye of the *llanero* will detect a band of cattle or some animal on what appears to the traveller to be an unvaried waste. In the dry season, from November to May, the temperature is inclined to be warm, but generally there is a breeze from the east or north-east. Towards the end of this season the air becomes charged with damp and the clouds accumulate in the south, sometimes breaking away and crossing the skies alone or in small groups. Electric phenomena are frequent at night, and the daily breeze is interrupted by hours of calm. The heat increases, the clouds lose their distinctive form and merge in a continuous mist, the wind passes to the west or south-west, and the rains begin.

The man of the plains has many other signs by which he forecasts the coming of the rains with



PALMS OF THE FOREST



ON THE PLAINS



SUNSHINE AND SHADOW IN VENEZUELA

great accuracy. When the Orinoco is in flood, the water in the tributaries is unable to find its normal discharge. The rivers break out over the country, and before very long the *sabanas* are converted into an inland sea. The wild animals emigrate, but the *llanero* has already led his cattle to the higher regions which the inundations do not reach. The trees and clumps of palms stand out above the waters. Often patches of grass become detached from the soil and float on the surface. The lizards, or iguanas, and various wild duck are the chief fauna which remain under these conditions. In the villages which are subject to the invasions of the rivers the houses are always built upon piles. From house to house transit is accomplished by canoe, and merchandise and goods are hawked about in the same manner.

The *llanero* is master of his environment. Where the stranger sees but a monotonous and limitless expansion of plain, he recognizes the stage on which the panorama of his existence is displayed. He knows the times and the seasons, and this picture of his whole life setting is unconsciously stamped upon his inner being. He is acquainted with the habits of his cattle, and he is well aware of where they feed and drink, when they retreat before the floods, and where they retire in the height of the rainless months. These things become instinctive to him, for a false step or a miscalculation might set him at a serious disadvantage in his constant fight against the difficulties which surround him. His wife, his mount, and his guitar are his three essential companions, to which may be added his lasso, made from the hide of a tough beast. With these assistants he is equipped to manage his home, his work, his journeys, and his pleasures. His life is not tinged to

such an extent with that melancholy which seems to be characteristic of the *gaucho* of Argentina. The *llanero* of Venezuela has a greater capacity for joy. His poetry is lighter, his dances more reflective of a happier temperament. His religion is a strange blend of mystical leanings, limited comprehension, and the tribalization of the great Name of Christianity.

The occupations of the *llanero* centre around the handling of the cattle. The large farms are known as *hatos*, and are scattered over the plains, particularly in the neighbourhood of San Fernando de Apure, where the land provides the most coveted pasture. These farms and buildings, erected usually on land not subject to inundations, belonging to the landed proprietors, have several rooms, divided from each other by mud walls, while in the yards and round about can usually be seen a few peons engaged in nothing in particular. The cattle wander at random over the plains, but the *llanero* knows instinctively where they are likely to be found at any given time of the year. When, however, the first showers of the rainy season begin to fall, it is usual to hold a *rodeo*, or round-up of the herds. If this is not done, the beasts will commence to wander away before the coming of the floods, and it will then be much more difficult to beat them up. When the time for the *rodeo* has been determined, the stewards, peons, and all who work on the *hatos* of the neighbourhood, and often the owners of the surrounding farms, meet at a central spot. A leader is appointed, and the *llaneros* ride out over the country the preceding evening, taking up their places in positions determined beforehand. In the early morning of the appointed day they rouse the cattle at the first appearance of light and herd them towards the chosen centre, on which from all directions similar

groups converge. The next step is the selection and identification of the beasts belonging to different owners. The owners themselves are generally present; the cattle are separated according to their marks or identified by various indications known only to the experienced hands. The noise and the confusion, the ceaseless movement, the activities of the peons enclosing the ring or subduing the more active bulls, make the scene something of a novelty to the visitor. Sometimes as many as 6,000 head of cattle are assembled in one such *rodeo*. When the operation is concluded, the different herds are set moving towards the *hatos* of their owners and driven into the *corral* or fenced-in space prepared for them. This final stage, simple as it may appear in words, occasions considerable difficulty. The distance to be covered may be long and the herd large. Frequently, however, it is at the entrance to the *corral* that the real trouble occurs. The beasts which wander over these wild plains are themselves often semi-savage. Generally the calves are taken in first. But if the herd refuses to follow, a stampede may result, and the entire labour from the beginning will be lost. This perhaps will be the least damage that will occur, and often the peons are trampled down or seriously injured.

It was, then, across these llanos that Bolívar, the Liberator, led his small body of troops to final triumph in the Andes of Colombia. The hardships with which that group of men contended in this historic march make it one of the greatest epics of the wars of liberation. Fouled with the mud of interminable swamps, constantly attacked by disease, and hampered by the poverty of their equipment, they did not lose sight of the final goal nor fail to attain it. In the Pantheon at Caracas are the mortal

remains of the celebrated leader. The territory which he freed, either indirectly or through personal effort, was seven times as large as that won by the North American armies under Washington. Yet Bolívar himself lacked that undying faith in his cause and that integrity of personal character which are essential to the complete picture of a really great man. Before he finished his career he himself came to the conclusion that he had ploughed the sea and that America had proved to be ungovernable. The only thing that could be done, he thought, was to emigrate. He died in bitterness and loneliness of spirit, unhonoured by that very country of Venezuela which had given him birth. Dark though the history of many of these republics has been, there are signs of brighter days on many horizons. Personally I find little pleasure in the cities which to many are the centres of civilization and luxury, filled with conveniences and attractions for the tourist. Too often in the society of these moneyed capitals those who should be the first to dedicate themselves to self-denying and perhaps costly service for the sake of the *patria* are spending their days in the bickerings of dishonest and petty politics, and in those machinations which are primarily designed for personal enrichment. In the interior and country regions it is different. Violence and danger may exist, but, when they do, they are preferable to the unctuous hypocrisy of the educated pharisee, just as an open enemy is to be welcomed rather than a traitor who dares not face the rudeness of the conflict. The primitive Indian is often a friend in the direst need. In the house of the *caboclo* or the *seringueiro* of the forest you can feel a contact of soul, a warmth of sympathy, a common desire to find some deeper solution for the profounder per-

sonal problems of life. The great valleys of the Andes shelter a world of ingenuous philosophy and simple thought. The freedom of the pastoral plains is the heritage of men who face unwonted dangers with a cheerful confidence, uncomplaining and unperturbed. These are the companionships which are most to be coveted, and of such stuff the finer passages of life are forged.

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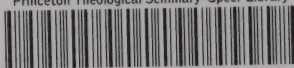
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